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**POLITICS AND THE GLASS CEILING IN AMERICAN LAW  
ENFORCEMENT:  
WHY NOT MORE WOMEN CHIEFS OF POLICE?**

by

MADELINE G. MEISTRICH

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
Of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education  
University of San Diego

January 2007

Dissertation Committee:

Robert Infantino, Ed.D., Chair  
Kenneth Gonzalez, Ph.D., Member  
Conrad Rutkowski, Ph.D., Member  
Mary Woods Scherr, Ph.D., Member

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## **ABSTRACT**

Law enforcement is one of the last male-dominated occupations. Out of 18,000 police departments in the United States, only 200 to 250 have women chiefs. Such underrepresentation reflects the “glass ceiling” effect of a gender-based metaphorical barrier that prevents women from rising to the top of an organization, regardless of qualifications.

The research examined three questions: what are the issues and problems articulated by women officers attempting to move upwards; what strategies were employed as they attempted to advance; and what strategies could help other women reach the top? Nine female primary participants in law enforcement leadership were interviewed, as were six male police chiefs and two other women in high ranks.

Seven barriers to advancement were identified: double standard, old boys club, queen bee, disloyalty, personal traits, race, and recruitment procedures. Six advancement strategies were suggested: mentoring, commitment, job competence, education, reputation, and work/life balance. The study analyzed the barriers and strategies for advancement and the methods proposed for overcoming each barrier.

The most compelling finding was that each participant exhibited a strong, resilient personality. Their leadership style is characterized by extreme confidence and indisputable assurance, balanced by awareness and acceptance of the operative political climate.

The study indicates that some women in law enforcement engaged in a form of denial of the victimization they experienced. It also indicates a contrast between the women’s perspectives and those of the male chiefs. The statistics on the progress women

have made as well as the experiences these participants lived dramatize the lack of advancement of women as law enforcement executives. The study suggests that when women finally reach the top, they frequently encounter a “rubber ceiling” resulting in their failure or sudden departure.

Considering the numbers of women in law enforcement and the time women have been employed, there are fewer women in chief level positions than would be expected. Legal action through court-ordered affirmative action like consent decrees, frequently the catalyst for meaningful social equality, may be useful in creating the change needed for gender equality in the law enforcement field.

## **DEDICATION**

In dedication to the memory of Rajan Bhatt, former USD student and close friend to my son, Jason Meistrich. A brilliant and studious young man, Rajan was extremely concerned about the inequalities that exist in our world and would have greatly appreciated the thesis of this dissertation. In spirit, he joins in the critical examination of gender and racial inequalities that lies at the heart of this research. In March of 2006, Rajan passed away. With great love and respect, I offer him this minor tribute.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I was fortunate to have had an exceptional dissertation committee of four members, chaired by Dr. Robert Infantino. Each of the members of my committee brought a particular area of expertise to the study of the topic of the glass ceiling in law enforcement. My positive experience in writing the dissertation is evidence of the importance of a strong committee to the overall dissertation process.

With much gratitude, I acknowledge the tremendous contributions made by my committee chair, Dr. Robert Infantino. Familiar with law enforcement and qualitative research, he was a perfect choice for dissertation advisor, and honored me by accepting my invitation to chair the committee. Dr. Infantino served as co-researcher as well as editor and provided the services of a true collaborator, epitomizing the definition of an academic colleague. Truly a professional educator as well as a kind human being, he went well beyond the requirements of a committee chair, putting in many hours in helping to produce this document.

Dr. Infantino is an exceptional scholar, a detailed and thorough editor, and is extremely skilled in leading a research project. Not enough can be said about his talents and willingness to help make this dissertation everything that I had hoped it to be. What better compliment could I give him than to say that he actually made it fun to write a dissertation!

I also offer my thanks to committee member, Dr. Mary Scherr, for the many astute comments that she made about this work. Her editorial suggestions went a long way in improving the quality of the research and writing. In addition, she played a large role in guiding the original formulation of the ideas of the research through the

information she offered in the many classes that she taught me during the course of my graduate study at USD. She had a particularly strong impact in shaping my ideas and providing the basis for the thesis of this project. I will always consider Dr. Scherr as one of the strongest and brightest women I have known during my career.

Dr. Ken Gonzalez, another important committee member, deserves my thanks for his vital role in initially shaping the direction of this research in the early stages of the project. Dr. Gonzalez helped me with writing techniques as well as in visualizing the scope of the research in a more meaningful way. He offered valuable perspectives on the topic of diversity and introduced important concepts into the analysis of the data.

I am privileged to have my friend and colleague, Dr. Conrad Rutkowski, as an outside committee member. I knew Dr. Rutkowski when I was on the faculty at Fordham University and he was in upper administration. His familiarity with the law enforcement field as well as his understanding of public policy provided typically astute observations relating to both major conceptualizations of the methodological approach as well as analysis of the data. Dr. Rutkowski is a skilled researcher and scholar and contributed to the direction of the study in many very important ways. A true friend and mentor, he is one of the most valued people in my life.

Apart from my committee, there were several individuals who had special meaning for me during my learning experience at USD. I wish to thank Paula Cordeiro, Dean of the School of Leadership and Educational Sciences, for her help in providing direction to me at a time when I was narrowing down my many interests and honing in on a final dissertation topic. I also would like to acknowledge the many things that I learned from her during my tenure as Coordinator of the Center for Learning and Teaching.



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My acknowledgements would not be complete without mentioning the personal support that I was given by my family during my years of graduate study as well as writing of the dissertation. My husband, Herb, and my son, Jason, embody everything that a family should be.

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## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

### Background to the Study

The statistics on women in leadership positions in law enforcement indicate inequity for women that is unparalleled in most occupations. Law enforcement is one of the last male-dominated occupations. Law enforcement executives are primarily male and seem reluctant to include women in their midst.

Approximately 1.1 to 1.3 percent of police chiefs are women, according to the National Center for Women & Policing. Margaret Moore, the director of that organization, stated that out of 18,000 police departments in the United States, “maybe 200 to 250 have women chiefs and many of those are campus police chiefs” (Goldston, 2006). Schulz (2004) found that women chiefs and sheriffs comprised about one percent of the top law enforcement executives in the country in 2004 (p. 22). Her survey showed that 42 percent of the women chiefs were found to be in charge of college and university police departments (Schulz, p. 196).

According to the 2001 Status of Women in Policing Survey (National Center for Women & Policing, 2002, p. 2), women hold only 7.3 percent of top command positions and 9.6 percent of supervisory positions within large police agencies. Top command positions include chief, deputy/assistant chief, commander/major, and captain or their equivalent. Supervisory positions include lieutenant and sergeant or their equivalent. More than half (55.9 percent) of large police agencies reported no women in top command positions, and 97.4 percent of small (i.e. less than 100 sworn personnel) and rural agencies have no women in top command positions.

These statistics reflect the situation that existed in 2001, approximately 25 years after the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (1976) issued a policy statement that criminal justice agencies should examine and assess the ways policies and practices of employment and advancement of women differ from men. The report implored agencies to “promptly implement procedures aimed at removing all restrictions to equal opportunity” (p. 1). Yet, women in law enforcement still encounter discrimination, harassment, and intimidation as they attempt to advance to leader positions (Garrison, Grant, and McCormick, 1998).

The number of women in law enforcement grew from 1972 to 1999, but evidence showed that the trend ended. The representation of women in large police agencies actually declined from 14.3 percent in 1999 to 12.7 percent in 2001 (National Center for Women & Policing, 2002, p. 2). In 2001, women accounted for only 12.7 percent of all sworn law enforcement positions in large agencies and only 8.1 percent in small and rural agencies (National Center for Women & Policing, 2002, p. 4).

The representation of women in leadership positions is not proportional to the percentage of women in sworn positions. Statistics show that women held only 7.3 percent of top command positions (i.e. captain, major, commander, deputy chief, or chief) in large police agencies and 3.4 percent in small and rural agencies (National Center for Women & Policing, 2002, p. 4). It is very clear that “barriers continue to exist for women in the field of law enforcement, and few agencies have specific strategies for increasing the number of women within their ranks” (National Center for Women & Policing, 2003, p. 2).

Such under-representation reflects the “glass ceiling” effect of gender-based differentials in advancement in the workplace. The Federal Glass Ceiling Commission (1995a:iii) defined the glass ceiling as consisting of “artificial barriers to the advancement of women and minorities.” The glass ceiling is an “unseen, yet unbreakable barrier that keeps minorities and women from rising to the upper rungs of the corporate ladder, regardless of their qualifications or achievements” (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995b:4).

Cotter (2001) described the glass ceiling as being gender or racial differences that are: (a) not explained by job-relevant characteristics of the employee; (b) greater at higher levels of the organizational hierarchy; (c) representative of inequality in the chances of advancement into higher levels; and (d) increasing over the course of a career. The term had been used as early as 1984 by Gay Bryant who referred to women being stuck in the top of middle management because of the lack of room for all of the women at the top (Frenkiel, 1984).

Yet, the authors most often credited for coining the phrase are Hymowitz and Schellhardt (1986) who wrote a cover piece in the *Wall Street Journal* on the glass ceiling as an invisible barrier blocking women from top jobs. The problem has been recognized for two decades, and still remains unsolved and provides detriment to American society in many ways.

While the lack of more women in leadership positions in law enforcement is a disadvantage to modern society, there are still some who applaud the paucity of women leaders in law enforcement and refuse to take the situation seriously. In 2004 when women were making a small push forward due to four women being appointed as police

chiefs, Rush Limbaugh referred to the National Center for Women & Policing as “feminazis,” and criticized what he termed “women activists” for not being satisfied with their small representation in law enforcement.

In his on-line comments entitled “Feminazis Whine over Cop Babe Success,” Limbaugh referred to the female “activists,” and stated that “they’re never happy,” and proceeded to speak of the prison controversy in Abu Ghraib in a gender disparaging and stereotypical fashion:

If we’ve got four new female police chiefs out there, then I guess we can watch out for some naked pyramids among prisoners in these new jailhouses that these women ran, because we had a woman running the prison in Abu [Ghraib]

(Limbaugh, 2004, ¶ 1).

However, legitimate researchers, academicians and women leaders in law enforcement recognize that women bring unique benefits to organizations when they are employed in leadership positions.

Rosener (1990) noted that women tend toward a nontraditional leadership style that serves to strengthen the organization. Rosener (1997) also revealed that women cope well with ambiguity, more easily share power and information, and strive to empower others. These leadership traits have been found to increase employee productivity, innovation, and profits. Rosener showed how the special talents of women in leadership positions can provide a competitive advantage and create positive work environments.

Second-generation women managers are “drawing on what is unique to their socialization as women and creating a different path to the top” (Rosener, 1990, p. 4).

The success of these women shows that “a nontraditional leadership style is well suited to

the conditions of some work environments and can increase an organization's chance of surviving in an uncertain world" (Rosener, p. 4).

Some have found that the success of women in leadership roles supports the belief that there is strength in a diversity of leadership styles (Rosener, 1990, p. 4). Rosener describes the leadership style shown by many successful women as interactive, and her research showed it to be quite effective.

Interactive leadership has proved to be effective, perhaps even advantageous, in organizations in which the women I interviewed have succeeded. As the work force increasingly demands participation and the economic environment increasingly requires rapid change, interactive leadership may emerge as the management style of choice for many organizations. For interactive leadership to take root more broadly, however, organizations must be willing to question the notion that the traditional command-and-control leadership style that has brought success in earlier decades is the only way to get results. Changing these organizations will not be easy (1990, p. 9).

Law enforcement is certainly a field that has been male dominated and can be characterized as traditional in leadership style and personnel.

Rosener's work implies that having women in leadership positions in law enforcement could provide benefits to the organization. In fact, some research has shown that women in law enforcement provide special skills in areas such as communication and defusing of confrontation, and are less likely to be involved in utilizing excessive force (National Center for Women & Policing, 2002, p. 3).

Some women law enforcement leaders are making clear the benefits that women bring to the force. Chief Lynne Johnson recently stated that “complaints of excessive force are far fewer against women officers” because women avoid altercations and prefer to “talk things through” (Goldston, 2006, ¶ 25).

Decades ago, research showed that women police executives provide advantages that are not offered by males. Price (1974) found that the women were more flexible, emotionally independent, self-confident, proactive, creative, and less authoritarian and prejudiced than their male counterparts.

Considering that women are shown to bring special interpersonal skills to policing and have strong collaborative or interactive skills, one would expect to find them easily climbing the rungs of police agencies. Yet, that has not been the case. Breaking the glass ceiling has been a long but successful evolution for women in many other fields. Apparently, however, there are unique barriers for women in law enforcement.

After providing descriptive success stories on women who have achieved the chief position in law enforcement agencies, Schulz (2004) ended her book entitled *Breaking the Brass Ceiling* by posing the following question: “Instead of asking ‘Why so few?’ the question sometime soon may become ‘Why not even more?’” (p. 209). The answer to that question should be made clearer through the study of women who have had difficulty in breaking the glass or “brass” ceiling of law enforcement. Indeed, there may be unpleasant and hard to accept answers to the question: “Why not more women chiefs of police?”



### Problem Statement

There is a need for systematic inquiry into the barriers that women face in attempting to move into the top leadership roles in law enforcement. It is important to gain insight into the struggles women face in order to bring their problems to light and to begin finding solutions that will result in changes and will empower women to move into top levels more easily in the future.

The author's preliminary inquiry, background research, and pilot study have indicated that political factors such as race, sexual issues known as "sexual politics," as well as political party battles, play a major and largely misunderstood role in preventing women from reaching the upper levels in law enforcement organizations. This study focuses on political and social issues that may account for gender discrimination in advancement to the position of chief. The findings of the pilot study will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the barriers that women police officers of high rank encounter when they are in positions to reach the chief of police level. The study focuses on those women who are qualified to seek the appointment as chief, or who have attempted to reach the top position, but who have encountered difficulties in their efforts toward advancement. Political and other factors that arose during their attempts at organizational advancement are explored.

This study should assist women who are attempting to advance their careers in law enforcement. More information about women in leadership roles in law enforcement will contribute to an understanding of the struggles they face. Having more women in top

positions in law enforcement should allow that field to reap the benefits that women have provided to other types of organizations.

### Research Questions

There were three research questions at the heart of this study. Two of the questions are descriptive in nature since they are meant to describe the perceptions of the participants concerning events in their lives having to do with the process of moving up in their careers. The third research question is more of a prescriptive exploration, probing into the counsel that could be provided by the participants to aspiring future leaders. The following questions provided guidance to the structure of the inquiry:

1. What are the perceived issues and problems articulated by women officers who are in high command positions and attempting to move to even higher levels?
2. What are the perceived strategies employed by high-ranking women law enforcement leaders as they attempt to reach the highest levels?
3. What different strategies could future generations of women police executives use to achieve more effective results in reaching the chief position?

### The Pilot Study

#### *Data Collection*

A pilot study was conducted in the academic year 2002-2003 as part of assigned projects in two graduate qualitative research methodology courses (Meistrich, 2003). That research was similar in nature to the research design proposed in this document. A brief description of the pilot study and its results is provided in this section. It served as the basis for the development of the larger study.

The two female participants selected for interview in the pilot study were in leadership positions in a municipal police department and were selected because of their exposure to the advancement process. They were identified by networking and utilizing contacts in the law enforcement field to designate individuals who were able to provide insight into the challenges women face in job advancement.

A conversational approach was used to interview the participants. In a conversational approach, questions are not defined in advance; rather they emerge naturally in the course of conversation (Patton, 2002, p. 342-34). Below is the question that was used to start the conversation:

I am attempting to find out more about why there are not more women in high-level positions in law enforcement. I am interested in talking with women who may have been or may be close in line for the police chief or other high-ranking position. Could you tell me about your experiences or situation with regard to advancement within this organization? (Meistrich, 2003)

Probes were utilized to elicit more in-depth information and elaboration of responses.

The following responses were collected through these interviews. Pseudonyms are employed throughout in order to protect the identities of the participants.

#### *The First Participant: Amanda*

The African-American participant was the only female assistant chief of police in the department in which she was employed. She was responsible for three areas of command and supervised 900 people. She had been an assistant chief for 10 ½ years at

the time of this interview. She reported having unsuccessfully attempted to move up into the chief position on two separate occasions.

On the first occasion, she had only served as a year as assistant chief and went through the process after learning that she possessed the qualifications for seeking the appointment. The appointment to chief in the city in which she worked was made by the city manager and approved by the city council. While unaware of it at the time she went through the process, Amanda was later told by a member of the city council that she had been opposed by one of the women on the city council solely because of Amanda's gender. The city in which she was employed had never had a woman chief, nor had a woman ever been considered.

On the second occasion that Amanda sought the appointment to chief seven years later, she encountered even harsher opposition. For one thing, the city manager objected that her Master's degree was received such a long time before, even though she had been working in law enforcement and teaching in that area for the twenty years since receiving the degree. This objection was a blow to Amanda because she had been purposefully working toward this appointment for the previous seven years, attempting to prepare herself for it in such ways as undertaking leadership training, going to institutes, attending FBI Academy, engaging in community service, and serving on boards. She had received several awards for her performance. She had already earned a graduate degree from an accredited university and never expected for it to be questioned.

Amanda was approached by individuals within the department and told that she should not apply for the chief position and should stay out of the competition. Since she

had much support from the local African-American community, she refused to remove herself from the process.

During this time, one of the representatives of the African-American community telephoned the city manager to ask him to speak at a community forum about the selection process. Immediately afterwards, Amanda was called by the assistant to a high-ranking city official to set up a meeting with the official and Amanda. At this meeting, Amanda was informed that she was not a desirable candidate because of her race. She was told by some members of the city council that the mayor and the city manager favored the selection of an Hispanic as chief.

Even after pointing out to city officials that EEO considerations required the selection to be based upon merit and not race, her comments fell on deaf ears as she was told that they didn't "want to hear that rhetoric." Amanda refused to cave in to the demands that she drop out of the race, and she went forward. The consequences were frightening as Amanda was threatened and harassed. "During that period of time, I got threatening phone calls telling me that my life was in danger if I continued with this process, that I should drop out" (Meistrich, 2003).

Additionally, Amanda was told by the city manager that the mayor would be interviewing the candidates. When Amanda pointed out to the city manager that the mayor's involvement in the selection process was a violation of the city charter, he still insisted on setting up the interview with the mayor. Amanda was directed to go to a hotel room to meet with the mayor. Upon arriving in the room that was set up as a small conference room, Amanda reporting being told "this was 100 percent top secret":

I couldn't say anything about it. I couldn't let anybody know that this interview was occurring. And I was afraid, so I didn't open my mouth. I didn't say one thing about it. So I showed up there, and then about fifteen minutes later the mayor comes in (Meistrich, 2003).

Amanda said that the mayor asked questions such as whether all of the people who were competing had talked about the process. Amanda was ordered by the city manager not to talk about the interview (Meistrich, 2003).

As result of some discussion among the candidates, it was later revealed to Amanda that some of the candidates had met secretly with the mayor as Amanda had, while others had not. "So it got out to the media. It was obvious that the mayor had violated the Charter, and had gotten involved in the politics and wasn't supposed to get involved" (Meistrich, 2003).

Attempting to determine why some candidates had secret meetings and others did not, one of Amanda's supporters met with the mayor to question the fairness of the selection process. Amanda reported that the mayor essentially told the supporter that "we run the city, and we can pick whoever we want" (Meistrich, 2003).

At one point, Amanda was called by one of the members of the city council and informed that due to pressure to select an Hispanic for chief, that things had already been "staged," meaning that the plan was already in place to select an Hispanic candidate. Not wanting to believe that the process would really operate in such fashion, Amanda continued to pursue her goal. "You want to believe that there is some sense of fairness and that there is dignity and that there is respect, and that there is room for competition" (Meistrich, 2003).

True to the forewarning, the plan had seemingly been put into place before the selection process played out. The Hispanic candidate who had been decided upon in advance was selected. That candidate had only been in the assistant chief position for less than two years, while Amanda had been there for over eight years.

After losing the appointment, Amanda filed a lawsuit challenging the unfairness of the process and the violation of the city charter. She spoke to the city council, telling them that “this is not a fair process” and that “this process needs to be investigated, it needs to be looked into.” She attempted to stop the swearing in of the new chief until the process was examined, but the Council refused to halt the proceedings.

Amanda eventually dropped her lawsuit when she suspected that the judge hearing the case was possibly influenced by the police chief who, she learned, was engaged in fundraising for that judge’s reelection campaign. As soon as she dropped the lawsuit, one of the city council members telephoned her and confirmed that the process had been orchestrated. Amanda reported the members as saying: “we were all in on it, and what we wanted was that we wanted the Hispanic vote” (Meistrich, 2003).

Amanda planned to continue serving as assistant chief until her retirement, with no plans to compete for the position again, however well qualified she was and how much support she had from her community. Her many years of preparing herself for the top position were in vain because of her race. Her cynicism was evident: “You sit back and think, do people really do that? Yeah, they really handle matters in this way, and then they talk about dignity and respect and fairness” (Meistrich, 2003).

As she reflected upon the political aspects of the selection process, Amanda felt that perhaps the city in which she worked is too provincial and conservative to be prepared to select a woman chief:

I think that part of it is that perhaps the city is not ready for a woman, and not ready for a black woman. A lot of people were amazed that I would have the nerve to even compete for the position. No other woman has had the nerve to do it. And you can ask the other women up here if they would ever compete (Meistrich, 2003).

Possibly the women who observed the treatment that Amanda was subjected to may have second thoughts about entering the selection process in this city. Yet another law enforcement executive provided information about her own career in the same city.

#### *The Second Participant: Belinda*

This participant was a former assistant chief of police in her department. She was demoted to Captain, a position which she still held at the time of the interview. Her demotion and subsequent observations are described below.

Belinda had been employed by the police department full-time since 1974. Inasmuch as she worked part-time with them prior to that, she had over thirty years of experience with that agency. She began as a patrol officer and was promoted to training officer at the training academy. She left the academy, become a detective, and subsequently was promoted to sergeant. She then went back to patrol and became a detective sergeant, then a lieutenant. She was promoted to captain in 1988. As Belinda described it, things were not so easy in those days:



Back then we weren't necessarily received real warm and fuzzy in the field. I had a sergeant who really didn't think women belonged here and told me that I didn't belong here and wanted me to quit (Meistrich, 2003).

However, after a while, women became more numerous on the force, and the newer male officers became accustomed to women in positions of authority on the force.

Belinda talked about Dolores, a woman who had decided to take the sergeant's test several decades ago and had to go to court in order to be allowed to take it.

According to Belinda, the technical objection to Dolores' attempt to take the test was that an officer was required to be classified as a "patrolman," which was impossible for a woman. Belinda stated that Dolores "opened the doors for all of us." Belinda was promoted to assistant chief in 1992 and worked for two chiefs with whom she had excellent relations. Then things changed.

A departing chief promoted a male, herein referred to as Joseph, described by Belinda as one of that chief's "SWAT buddies," to an assistant chief position. According to Belinda, Joseph did not have the required background for such a position. He had been working in consulting and was never in charge of a police station, nor had he ever worked in any of the operational areas such as investigations, patrol, labor relations, personnel, or budget. "He came up with some kind of wacky ideas" and "we started doing some things that were nonsensical." Joseph eventually became executive assistant chief and therefore was in a superior position to Belinda.

The resulting organizational changes led to Belinda's eventual demotion. "I had been actually the chief of investigations, which was seen as one of the most powerful positions. And I had that for three years . . . and Joseph seemed resentful of that for some

reason.” Then the process of selecting a new chief occurred. Although presented as open to qualified candidates, this process was a “done deal” according to Belinda. She explained that everyone knew ahead of time that the chief who was eventually selected, herein referred to as Al, occupied the front runner position:

I didn’t even put in for it because even though Al had just made assistant chief, he was very junior, had not worked any of the administrative side of the house, had no clue on budget, had no clue on labor relations. But he was Latino (Meistrich, 2003).

Yet, there was another qualified candidate who was Latino; but Al was considered extremely desirable for political reasons. “And it was really bizarre because we had another Latino assistant chief who has been controversial at times, but he’s not a bad guy, but James didn’t like him.” The Latino candidate who eventually received the position was favored by the outgoing chief. “James fast-tracked Al, who is our current chief. You have to understand, he’s a former marine, and he also most closely identifies with the SWAT guys. There’s kind of a machismo thing there” (Meistrich, 2003).

The results of Al’s swift promotion were not positive. His tenure was “rocky.” Morale was low, and the staff was unhappy. Two of the most junior assistant chiefs were promoted and thus supervised the more experienced ones. Decisions were centralized in an organizational restructuring which prevented qualified executives from making their own decisions. “They were just on a power trip that was unbelievable. And they didn’t know what they were doing, which was the bad part” (Meistrich, 2003).

One of the junior chiefs who was put in charge of the others was a woman, Carolyn. “She became just a major problem; it went way to her head.” She and the other

elevated assistant chief, Joseph, made many personnel changes. They forced out people “just because they decided they didn’t like them.” This included top budget and personnel executives, negatively affecting the way the organization functioned. Belinda felt that these people were forced out because Carolyn felt threatened by them because they were knowledgeable and capable and spoke the truth.

They told her what she needed to hear, instead of what she wanted to hear and she forced them into early retirement. And she did that to so many people. There are so many people that she ran out of here for no reason other than she was just nasty (Meistrich, 2003).

Belinda felt that the need for control was the motivating factor behind what happened. She was concerned about the impact on the organization of the mixture of inexperience and need for control. “But the scary thing is that it’s tight control by somebody who never ran a station, who has never been a captain of a station, who doesn’t even know” (Meistrich, 2003).

It was apparent to Belinda that questioning this powerful group would only lead to trouble. As Belinda stated: “You are not allowed to question anything. That’s the mentality we’re dealing with, it’s all about image and ego and power and control” (Meistrich, 2003).

Belinda felt that the Chief empowered the two appointed senior chiefs to “just trash everybody out in this organization” due to his “machismo issue and ego.” According to her: “They think they can do anything to anybody at any time and they’re God” (Meistrich, 2003).

She found this to apply not only to the men, but to the woman in the organization who was involved in the administrative decisions. In speaking of her former friend,

Carolyn, Belinda said:

She all of a sudden got in this position where she was God, and it was like I'm God and screw all the rest of you. All of her women friends. All of a sudden she was too good for them (Meistrich, 2003).

This was a difficult situation because prior to Carolyn's promotion, Belinda had been in a higher position than Carolyn, and at some point had even supervised her.

Belinda began to worry about Carolyn's interpersonal skills, a concern voiced by other women:

She had been on a power trip before that. I heard from other women. I had always outranked her up until that point. Some of the other women told me, they said "you just found that out? Those of us who she outranked before already knew that." She cracked on people below her, including them (Meistrich, 2003).

Belinda was troubled to learn that Carolyn was particularly hard on women. "Had I been aware of that, I would not have given her some of the good recommendations to get promoted that I did." Belinda explained more about her demotion:

What happened was out of the blue. I was called in and just told that I had my choice of leaving the Department or demoting to Captain. I was given no reason. I had never been told anything other than my work was excellent. I had been given no forewarning. I had not been told I needed to improve in any area (Meistrich, 2003).

Belinda felt that the reason that she was demoted was that she found some problems in Joseph's area of oversight when he was moved up to executive assistant chief. Belinda made the mistake of pointing them out to Carolyn:

I took over some of the units that Joseph had, and they were in shambles. They were in absolute shambles. And I went to Carolyn over some stuff because what I was told and what I found had nothing in common. I think the fact that I went to Carolyn and said hey this stuff we've got to fix it. And I think he took offense. I think Joseph took offense or whatever that I embarrassed him or whatever (Meistrich, 2003).

Apparently, this attempt to correct problems in the organization affected Belinda's standing in that organization. "But you know Joseph resented me because I basically pulled the curtain away on some things." She was a target for this newly installed power group. As Belinda described it:

Joseph actually told someone that he's the one who initiated the action against me. That basically if they could screw with me, with what was seen as a powerful position . . . that nobody else would mess with him and he would be all powerful (Meistrich, 2003).

The emotional difficulties of dealing with the demotion have been tremendous. Rumors spread that she had done something very wrong or even illegal. There were even rumors that Belinda had an affair with Carolyn's husband that had caused Carolyn to retaliate. The truth was that before her promotion, Belinda had supervised Carolyn's husband and had pointed some of his management problems out to him, suggesting that

he correct them. Shortly thereafter, Belinda was working under both Carolyn and her husband.

Belinda felt that her difficult decision to stay and accept the demotion was met with surprise, and that it may have served to preserve the fate of another female assistant chief, a woman of color named Amanda:

Then they just tried to make Amanda so miserable she would leave, but that was a different thing. I think if they had pulled it off with the white girl, they would have gone after the black girl. There are several of us who were up there who believe that. For obvious reasons. You can't play the race card if they've already done the white girl. A pretty bizarre situation (Meistrich, 2003).

What Belinda called "the purge of all our female civilian managers" involved various means of making the situation so difficult for competent women that they left the organization. In speaking about an individual who had attempted to unite other women to speak up about some of the problems they saw with the new management, Belinda stated:

All of a sudden she is buried in busy work, make work, and she says they're just beating me. And undoubtedly, they were, they're just saying 'okay, we'll get back at you; we'll give you more work to do' (Meistrich, 2003).

Some of these competent women were never replaced; others were replaced by less competent employees who were not inclined to question what they were told. Belinda named over half a dozen women who were forced out and treated in unfair and demeaning ways, being informed at open meetings that they had lost their authority or having male counterparts put in supervisory positions over them for no reason. It was so

serious that some of the women appealed to the city manager and some of them sued the city. Some of these lawsuits were still pending at the time of the interview.

In collecting this data, an obvious question arose for the researcher: “*Who Protects the Women Who Protect Us?*” This question was posed to Belinda. She stated that another woman had gone to the city manager about the situation and “he just blew the whole thing off.” What about the mayor? “The mayor’s not going to do anything. . .” Belinda’s demotion happened at a time when the city council was in transition. Belinda noted the timing of her demotion:

It was like they saw an opportunity where nobody knew any of the players, and they could go in and say I did whatever and just pull it off. I think a whole lot more questions would have been asked by the previous Council (Meistrich, 2003).

She also felt let down by the city manager and the city attorney, neither of whom attempted to help either her or the other women who were mistreated. As she expressed her disappointment:

When you get to the higher management level, there’s really no place to go other than to expect the city manager and city attorney to ask what’s going on and to ask the right questions (Meistrich, 2003).

Belinda felt that there was a clear attempt to get the competent women to leave. When directly asked if she felt that there was an attempt to do this, she responded: “Yes, there’s no doubt in my mind” (Meistrich, 2003).

She felt that much of it was done with malice and with an eye in mind toward replacing the women with the buddies of those in control. She also felt that the fact that these women were competent made them targets rather than protected them. “I honestly

think that neither Al nor Joseph had any use for strong women because they were threatened by them.” Her explanation for this was that “strong and competent women tend to speak their mind” (Meistrich, 2003).

Belinda is an example of such strength. When asked how she managed to remain determined when so many others were forced to leave, her response was: “You know what, I’ll be damned if I’m going to let them run me out of here. I had a Sergeant try to do that thirty years ago. I’m not going” (Meistrich, 2003).

What happened to Carolyn, the woman who had turned on the other women? It appears that she was used by the males as a tool to clear out the other women, but then was herself discarded when she was of no more use to them. The conflict came over appointment of a high-level civilian position, given to a male who Carolyn felt was unqualified. Carolyn objected, and then was summarily dismissed. Belinda described it this way: “And the next thing you know, she was gone. And [the appointed male] was one of the good old boys, the racquetball players. I mean he is one of the boys” (Meistrich, 2003).

Apparently, Carolyn had made a mistake by attempting to clear out one of the poorly performing males, rather than just the competent women. Belinda learned about this after Carolyn had left. As Belinda explained: “It looks like Al and Joseph finally pushed Carolyn out because she took on one of their boys” (Meistrich, 2003).

According to Belinda, the “Old Boys Club” has a major impact on the management of the department and the decisions that are made. This appears to go beyond the usual congeniality seen in the workplace: “There’s a serious problem. There’s a real machismo thing there” (Meistrich, 2003).



Belinda stated that some of the women get no credit for the good work they do, yet the men are applauded for work, even when it is of lesser quality. Belinda chalked it up to the existence of an “Old Boys Club”:

But if there are certain guys that are in this “Old Boys Club,” they don’t have to do much of anything. They can show up to work on time and make front page news. Because of the “Old Boys Club.” Now it’s not all of the boys. All of the boys aren’t allowed in the “Old Boys Club” either, by the way (Meistrich, 2003).

When asked how one gets in the “Old Boys Club,” Belinda explained the importance of doing consulting work together, playing racquetball with the men in power, or having been on the SWAT team with them. “If you were a SWAT guy, you are almost automatically included. And there’s only been two women in SWAT in the history of the department” (Meistrich, 2003).

Women who do good work don’t get the appreciation that is extended to achievements in SWAT. “The SWAT thing is put on this big pedestal, and women were like they are not part of the testosterone club or something.” The men’s club is exclusive and not related to job performance. “It’s like this little club, the men’s room. It’s ugly” (Meistrich, 2003).

Belinda had a gloomy picture concerning the possibility of a woman in the chief’s position in this city. Her feeling was that there were many capable women candidates, but they are not likely to be chosen for any upcoming chief positions. Furthermore, at the point that a woman is selected, it would not likely be based on competency, but on which woman will play the political game and be willing to be used as a tool rather than being strong and outspoken about her own views on management.

Interestingly enough, at the time of these interviews, both Belinda and Amanda, the other female assistant chief who also had an experience of discriminatory treatment within the same organization, were both qualified for competition for an upcoming chief position vacancy. Belinda pondered when asked what is the likelihood that one of them will be chosen: “Neither one of us has a snowball’s chance in hell anyway. But it’s making a statement. We need to make a statement that the women cannot just be pushed aside” (Meistrich, 2003).

### *Conclusions from Pilot Study*

The pilot study raised questions about sexual discrimination in the advancement of women. Frequently, issues of race are also involved with respect to the analysis of equal opportunities in promotions. The glass ceiling is usually defined in terms of gender and racial barriers. Yet, a thoughtful analysis of the meaning of the information provided in these interviews may suggest another factor that prohibits equal opportunity, one that precludes the eradication of inequity. It could be identified as “the Old Boys Club factor.”

An understanding of that element is furthered by exploring the male need for machismo, as efforts toward gender equality might lead one to think. In fact, machismo is often a valued representation of masculinity, which is largely a cultural construct that has to be earned and is constantly being tested (Gilmore, 1991).

Perhaps researchers are missing a vital component of the explanation of discrimination in the workplace. The real key to the understanding of why qualified people are sometimes precluded from advancing in organizations may not be something

as easily identified as gender or race, but something of a less tangible nature, i.e. the inclusion of an individual in the “Old Boys Club.” Certainly, such inclusion is impacted by race and gender, but it goes beyond such identification.

As shown in the pilot study, one may be of the politically preferred race and be qualified, yet still not receive an opportunity because of exclusion from the powerful gender-defined clique controlling the decision-making. If such processes operate to determine promotional opportunities in the law enforcement workplace, future research and policy-making would benefit by the recognition of the importance of the machismo dominant “Old Boys Club factor.”

The question that arose in the process of the pilot study research appeared at times to be rhetorical: “Who protects the women who protect us?” A supplementary research question with intriguing nuances became apparent in the search for an answer. Thinking at times that the answer would be some political body such as the city manager, city council, city attorney, judicial system, mayor, or even governor, it was disturbing to find that the normal authorities expected to exercise control over gender inequities were nonresponsive. The relevance of this finding emphasized the importance of the current study in the mind of the researcher.

The mistrust that women felt toward their legal protectors was evidenced by the fact that, according to Belinda, one woman who was in need of representation elected to obtain her own outside counsel rather than utilize the city attorney’s office. Belinda reported that another woman sent a letter to the city manager about the discrimination that she experienced and felt that he didn’t do “a damn thing” about it. Also, Belinda and

Amanda had each approached the city manager about their complaints and had both felt “brushed off” by him.

Belinda stated that she now felt that she had no viable recourse regarding the mistreatment that she both experienced and observed. She considered the city attorney to be the party most responsible for intervening in this situation, but that the individual in that position had let her down.

After quizzing Belinda on who would step in to support these women who were treated with such inequity, it eventually it became evident that at least in some cities, the question “Who protects the women who protect us?” is not rhetorical at all; the answer is very clearly, “No one!” That answer came through loud and clear in the interview with Belinda, and it was clear that she was disheartened about the lack of loyalty provided her by the organization to which she had devoted her career in such a steadfast manner.

Through domain analysis, common themes emerge from the qualitative information provided in the pilot study. One of the themes that presented itself was politics. That theme arose from the question: “Who protects the women who protect us?” Another theme that arose was the machismo factor. That theme was presented by the recurrent mention of “the Old Boys Club” and the SWAT team.

The present research drew upon the themes evidenced through the pilot study to generate interview questions to more fully elicit information such as that concerning the political factors that provide barriers to women who attempt to break the glass ceiling in law enforcement. Additional questions that were found important to be considered involved matters of sexual politics or race relations. These questions and others would form the basis for the direction taken in the current research project.

## **CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

In Chapter I the subject of the research project was introduced and explained. The subject of inquiry is the discrimination that women experience in attempting to move to the chief level in law enforcement agencies. Earlier qualitative research, in the form of a pilot study, provided direction to the research. To assess the state of prior research, a review of the literature was undertaken. That review is presented in this chapter.

There will be two aspects to the literature review. The first section of the review will be the more traditional review with a focus on gender discrimination in the top ranks of law enforcement, the topic of study. The second section of the review will bring together some related sources that assist in shedding light on the various issues that are discussed in Chapter VI. These sources will be utilized in Chapter VI as attempts are made to provide analyses and conclusions by bringing together information from sources that are, to varying degrees, peripherally related to the research on the advancement of women to chief level positions in law enforcement.

### **Literature on Gender Inequity in Law Enforcement Leadership**

The literature review in this dissertation will include materials outside the boundaries of traditional scholarly literature. Materials from professional organizations and government documents are presented. Also, some peripheral literature on both law enforcement and gender issues in general are explored. In order to provide balance, the male perspective on the topic of gender inequality in law enforcement leadership is searched for in the literature review. The primary focus of the literature review is on the advancement of women to the top position in law enforcement and will reflect the fact that there is a paucity of thoughtful research in this area.

The literature on women in leadership positions in law enforcement is minimal. Moreover, most of the existing literature consists of explorations that are not only limited in number, but inadequate in various respects. Much of the literature is reportive or reflective observation, rather than systematic inquiry. The literature review is organized around the types of literature that are available.

### *Historical Accounts*

Appier's (1997) study of women in law enforcement was generally historical, focusing on women pioneers in police work. Even in her discussion of the second generation of women police officers, her work was more a political treatise than a research study.

Appier described the evolution of women in police work, beginning with the first policewoman in the United States, Alice Stebbins Wells. In 1910, this five foot two inch, 37 year-old assistant pastor and social worker in Los Angeles decided to become a police officer. She felt that women could perform some police duties better than men such as comforting, guiding, and questioning children. Wells thought that women could have greater insight than men into how to prevent women and children from becoming either perpetrators of or victims of crime (p. 9).

In order to receive her appointment, she gathered thirty-five signatures on a petition that she provided to city officials and eventually to the Los Angeles City Council allowing for legal appointment of herself as a police officer (p. 9). That year, 1910, the council passed an ordinance allowing for the employment of one woman as a police officer, thus making Wells the first policewoman in the United States (p. 10).

Assuming her leadership role in the movement for women police officers, Wells delivered lectures across the United States and Canada on the need for policewomen. Due in large part to her efforts, by 1915, women's clubs and other organizations had successfully campaigned for women law enforcement officers in 16 cities in the United States. By 1917, that number rose to 125 cities (p. 10).

Yet, it was not just the efforts of Wells alone that accounted for this tremendous increase. According to Appier, other factors converged during that time period to give impetus to the movement: female activism in social welfare reform, the juvenile court movement, and the sexual cultural changes of the time (p. 10).

Middle class women had engaged in many social action crusades during the nineteenth century. Chicago clubwomen had played an important role in criminal justice for women and children in the late nineteenth century. By the early twentieth century, concerns of middle class women over the moral and physical safety of women and teenage girls led to increased demand for women police (p. 11). These women carved out a maternalistic niche in their police roles which allowed for the rapid proliferation of women into the departments (p. 11). However, the advancement of women in the field slowed rapidly with the rising dominance of the crime control model of justice "that equated police work with the masculine function of crime fighting" (p. 168).

### *Biographical Studies*

Some literature consists of autobiographical or biographical descriptions of a single individual's efforts. For example, Police Chief Penny Harrington wrote an autobiographical description of becoming Chief of the Portland Police Bureau, making

her, in 1985, the first woman named chief of a major metropolitan police force (Harrington, 1999).

Harrington was born in Michigan in 1941 (p. 21). She was raised in a family where generosity and the importance of community were taught to her daily. There were no gender role models set in the family, and she was encouraged that one can do anything that one wants. Yet, she grew up in a time of limited role models for women (p. 23).

Harrington encountered her first nontraditional role model by assignment to the Lansing Police Department on career day in high school. She spent the day with a policewoman who influenced her to pursue nontraditional avenues for women and to become a policewoman. Not aware of sex discrimination, she accepted working with juveniles and children rather than engaging in crime scene investigation as the men were assigned. She described her situation in law enforcement as nontraditional because she was not working as a stenographer (p. 23).

Marrying another police officer led Harrington to become a legal secretary because it turned out that the sheriff's office in Oregon where she and her husband were offered jobs had a rule against hiring married couples, so her husband assumed the police officer position. Eventually, she took a position with the Portland Police Bureau (p. 23).

In Portland, she was one of only 18 women officers in a force of 700 and described being exposed to situations that by today's standards would be considered sexual harassment. Harrington reported that in the mid 1960's all women in the department worked in the Women's Protective Division, wearing suits and hats, gloves and high heels. They did not go out in patrol cars, and were not viewed by the men as "real cops" (p. 26).



Harrington's story is one of rise to the top as police chief and ultimate fall as a tarnished "pariah" in law enforcement due to the strength of the "good old boys" network. She served as Portland's chief of police for only a short time, assuming office in 1985 and leaving in 1986. She was "forced to resign amidst unsupported allegations of being 'soft on drugs,' department mismanagement, and 'defects in leadership'" (p. 19). Yet, Harrington triumphed by never losing her spirit and is heralded for shattering the "bullet-proof glass ceiling."

Another example of the biographical style of literature in the area was a description of Police Chief Beverly J. Harvard as the first African-American woman to head a major metropolitan police department as Chief of Police of the Atlanta Police Department (Whetstone, 1995). The biographical accounts of both Harrington and Harvard were essentially laudatory and entertaining, done with the orientation of praising the accomplishments of the few women who have reached the top in law enforcement.

Harvard had an interesting beginning in the field of law enforcement; it began on a bet. She wagered \$100 to her husband that she could become a police officer after he and some friends questioned the recruitment of women into the Atlanta police force. The friends suggested that women of larger physical size could possibly do the job, but not someone of Harvard's small size. On the ride home from the evening with the friends, she placed the wager with her husband that would eventually lead to her achieving a career of distinction (p. 92).

Although not really serious about staying in law enforcement, Harvard followed through on her bet, deciding to at least stay long enough to attend the academy for the learning experience that it would provide. She eventually decided during the training that

she actually did want to become a police officer. Interestingly enough, her husband was not ready for the idea. A friendly wager had become serious; his wife was now on patrol. Her husband began following her and her partner around due to his fear for her safety. Eventually, she convinced him that she was now truly a trained officer of the law (p. 93).

Harvard progressed rapidly, ascending through the ranks of patrol, affirmative action specialist, public affairs director, and in 1984 she was promoted to become the department's first African-American female deputy chief of police. After a maternity leave, she was named acting chief in 1994. She was then appointed as chief later that year, leading a force of 2000 sworn officers and civilians responsible for a \$93 million budget (p. 94).

Perhaps explaining some of the reasons behind her success, Harvard stated that a competent chief is "a good communicator who believes in participatory management and is flexible and open to change" (p. 94). Her personal goals included showing her daughter that a woman can have a high profile career as well as a family. Her success answers her own question: "Why not a woman?" (p. 94).

### *Journalistic Publications*

Some authors such as McArdle (2004) have written popular discourse on the topic of women police leadership. She wrote in *Boston Globe Magazine* about the fact that three women were recently placed in top criminal justice positions in Massachusetts, two of those in law enforcement. One woman was appointed as the first female commissioner of the Boston Police Department, one woman won the race for Suffolk County sheriff, and another woman became the first woman commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Correction.

McArdle (2004) raised the question as to whether it was mere coincidence that Massachusetts suddenly became the only place in the country to place women at the top of three of its most powerful law enforcement organizations, an unprecedented situation, or whether other theories could explain the timing. All three women were brought into these organizations during periods of upheaval, causing some to wonder whether the purposes were to watch them closely and use the difficulties they would encounter against them in describing their tenure as failure.

Byrd (2004) wrote about Ella Bully-Cummings, who became the first female police chief in Detroit in 2003, earning it the distinction of being the largest city with a woman police chief. Overseeing a staff of 4200 and a \$300 million annual budget, she entered office during a difficult time. She was immediately faced with a federal investigation of the department concerning problems with use of force, conditions of confinement, and witness detention. Her department was under two consent decrees with the U.S. Department of Justice to change its practices. She recognized that the challenges of winning community trust would take a long process of change (Byrd, 2004).

Garrett (2004) reported on Susan Riseling, Police Chief of UW-Madison was one of the first women police chiefs in the nation and paved the way for other women, acknowledging that it was not always an easy journey. A physically petite person, she was frequently challenged about her size. One question that she reported being posed to her was what to call her. Someone stated that they had referred to the former chief as “Chief,” but since she was a woman, they didn’t know what to call her. Her response to the question was that “*Chief* will do just fine” (Garrett, 2004, p. 19).

Jet (1996), a magazine/journal focusing on African American issues, reported that Ivin B. Lee had her own questions about the trailblazing process of women becoming police chiefs. Lee became Charleston's first African-American female officer, their first female detective, and then in 1996 the first female police chief in Dunbar, West Virginia. While proud of the distinction of being first, she questioned why she is the only one. She voiced her feelings of needing to fulfill obligations in order to break ground for others to follow the ground she has paved.

### *Scholarly Research*

Gold (1999) provided some vignettes on women in command positions, describing the harassment and discrimination they encountered and offering advice for other women in the field. In addition to providing a history of women in policing, Gold presented statistics on women in the field and offered portraits of trailblazing women who broke the glass ceiling of law enforcement to achieve command positions.

Gold's work included thirteen women who occupied leadership roles as commanders of law enforcement agencies at high, but not necessarily top levels. She included women at the lieutenant level, as well as at the police chief or sheriff level. Gold wrote about women such as Penny Harrington, who are considered trailblazers for women as law enforcement leaders.

Another one of the women described in Gold's book was Betty Kelepecz, who was Assistant Commander of Operations at the Los Angeles Police Department at the time of the writing of Gold's book. In achieving that position, Kelepecz had at the time reached the highest rank that a woman had held in that organization. She has become recognized as a strong role model to other women.

In 2003, Kelepecz became Chief of the San Diego Harbor Police Department. She received the Woman Law Enforcement Executive of the Year award in 2004 by the National Association of Women Law Enforcement Executives (NAWLEE, 2005). Since the writing of Gold's book, in 2005 Kelepecz resigned from this post and filed a \$2 million claim against the Port District on the grounds of alleged discrimination, harassment and retaliation ("Former Harbor Police Chief Files Claim," 2005).

Gold's research indicated that women need skill, determination, persistence, and humor to achieve their goals. In providing stories of top-ranking women in leadership positions in law enforcement, she stressed the importance of mentoring by those in leadership positions. Gold encouraged successful women in law enforcement to mentor other women in the profession to help women overcome hurdles. Gold's research is more demonstrative of the type of solution-seeking work that is needed in this field, but it does not specifically focus on women who achieve or desire the top level position.

Collins and Scarborough (2002) pointed out that there was minimal research on the competency of women in law enforcement until women entered uniformed patrol in the late 1960's and early 1970's. The authors attributed this to the fact that, prior to that time, women had been performing tasks considered gender appropriate such as working with juveniles and women. Even when women officers first had arrest duties, they were assigned to the enforcement of laws concerning dance halls, theatres and skating rinks, and finding missing persons (p. 18). Only when they entered situations identified as dangerous and requiring physical strength and dominance was it considered necessary to institute competency evaluations of their job performance (p. 20).

In addition to providing historical material and describing the types of careers held by women in both public and private law enforcement, Collins and Scarborough made suggestions concerning the usefulness of networking and provided some research, thereby offering a more comprehensive examination of the topic of women in law enforcement.

They conducted phone interviews of 46 women members of professional law enforcement organizations in 1998 and 1999 (p. 133). Their research provided information on perceived barriers to advancement for women in law enforcement. The largest obstacle reported by women was the “good old boys” network and negative attitudes toward women. Thirty percent of the women described this as the greatest barrier (p. 136). Other significant obstacles were: balancing family and work, politics and bureaucracy, gender, age, and financial constraints of the organization (p. 136). Only 13 percent of the women denied encountering any career obstacles (p. 136).

The work of Collins and Scarborough was not focused on the top level positions, but did include a section on women executives in law enforcement. While not specifically targeting the problems in reaching the highest rung, this research laid a framework for the type of additional study needed in the area. Some of that was provided by Schulz.

Schulz (1995) had contributed to the historical accounts of women in policing, offering a social history of the roles women filled in police work through the 1980's. She described the challenges they sought in attempting to be represented on the patrol forces. In that book, Schulz described the changing role of women and noted the fact that women were beginning to achieve the position of police chief. Schulz's 1995 work was similar to other historical accounts.

Another publication by Schulz (2003) provided a statistical profile of women chiefs of police. She referred to the 1964 Civil Rights Act and noted the barriers that continue to inhibit women's advancement in police departments. She provided supportive evidence based upon statistics indicating the differences between the number of years that women have spent in policing and the number of years they have served as chiefs.

In *Breaking the Brass Ceiling*, Schulz (2004) has provided to date the most relevant study of women police chiefs. She interviewed more than 100 successful women police chiefs and sheriffs and noted that they shared certain characteristics: they began their careers in the late 1970's or early 1980's, had strong mentors, had no more than two children, and possessed a master's or higher degree, showing that generally they were more educated than their male colleagues.

Shultz (2004) reported the challenges that these women shared in their groundbreaking success in reaching the top of their law enforcement organizations. She told their stories and described the various ways in which they achieved the top position. She made comparisons and drew parallels between women who achieved success in different sizes and types of organizations.

Schulz's (2004) work is the most current scholarly research available in the field in providing guidance for this study. However, the data are primarily based upon questionnaires, supplemented by interviews and documents research. The data are derived from 37 closed-ended and open-ended questions in a survey conducted in 2001, and by interviews conducted between 2000 and 2004. While over 100 women were included in this research, much of the qualitative data were collected in a casual fashion

such as telephone conversations, emails, and conference presentations. The results are a rather comprehensive portrait of women law enforcement leaders, yet with little in-depth analysis of individual cases.

#### Related Literature on Women in Leadership

A leading nonprofit research and advisory organization, Catalyst, aims to build inclusive environments for women and expand opportunities for women in the workplace (Catalyst, 2006). For ten years, that organization has tracked women Fortune 500 executives. Their findings have consistently been that women, and especially women of color, have shown little advancement to top paying leadership jobs over the past decade (p. 1). In fact, growth has slowed to the point that increases in the percentage of women in corporate officer positions now are less than one percentage point a year and thus “progress has almost come to a standstill (p. 1). Catalyst has warned that unless the projected growth trends dramatically change, it could “take 40 years for women to reach parity with men in corporate officer ranks” (p. 1).

The disparity has been attributed to a phenomenon that for at least two decades has been termed “the glass ceiling.” Indicating little progress in cracking this ceiling, surveys as recently as 2006 show that among business executives fully 70 percent of women and even 57 percent of men believe this “invisible barrier” prevents more women from moving upwards in business careers (Clark, 2006, ¶ 1). Women still earn only 77 percent as much as men do (Clark, ¶ 3).

However, Carol Gallagher, president of Executive Women’s Alliance and well-known author on women in business (Gallagher, 2000), was quoted as saying that women are no longer as worried as they once were about the pay gap that still exists (Clark,



2006, ¶ 4). A possible explanation for the reduced concern among women about salary disparity was offered by Susan Solovik, CEO of a company that deals with small-business owners. Solovik said that many women have gone around the glass ceiling by going into business for themselves: “There is really no glass ceiling when it comes to owning your own business” (Clark, ¶ 15).

Oakley (2000) found that women have increased in numbers in middle management positions, but not in CEO positions in large corporations. She offered many reasons for why this might be so and discussed differences in leadership styles of men and women. After analyzing these explanations, Oakley also noted that many capable women may be avoiding the barriers found in corporate careers by going into entrepreneurial endeavors.

But this may not be the best solution for solving a social inequity. Many women may not have the capital or support required to fund their foray into financial independence. And in some cases these may be the women for whom the metaphorical ceiling of resistance is composed of a much stronger substance. Catalyst (1999) described the “concrete ceiling” faced by women of color which prevented even fewer minority women from reaching the top of the corporate ladder.

Furthermore, the ceilings of either concrete or glass are not eliminated simply by the ascension of an insignificant number of women to the top of their professions. When Carleton Fiorina became the first woman named executive officer of a Fortune 500 company, her appointment was pointed to by some as evidence that advancement barriers no longer exist. She claimed that her appointment proved that women face no more limits whatsoever and that “there is not a glass ceiling” (Meyer, 1999, p. 56). However,

research by Cotter, et. al. (2001) showed through quantitative analysis that glass ceiling discrimination does exist.

The business model has also been applied to the legal profession, resulting in the same discrimination for women in law. The partner-associate model puts women on a partnership track to success that makes climbing the career ladder and simultaneously taking on roles as mothers an almost impossible endeavor. The result has been that a very small percentage of partners at the nation's law firms are women and at the present rate of increase will not become equally represented in partnership for several more years (Rikleen, 2006).

Rikleen's findings were supported by other reports. Catalyst (2001) conducted studies on gender disparities in career progress in law firms as well as in the corporate world, finding that women represented 15.6 percent of law firm partners and an even smaller 13.9 percent of equity partners.

Rikleen offered suggestions on how the organizational structure of law firms should change rather than continuing with what she termed the "antiquated business models" of the past. This is a much different approach than the focus that in the past has generally been on how women can change themselves in order to fit into the institutional culture in a way that better allows for success. Rikleen places responsibility on organizations to move away from the 200 year old business model that fails to give sufficient attention to "the people side of management."

What for decades has been referred to as an invisible glass ceiling barrier, Rikleen now portrays with a "gauntlet" metaphor. She spoke of the "challenges and roadblocks" women face in struggling to succeed in law firms (2006, p. 7). She provided data from

both women in the legal profession as well as the sometimes divergent perspectives of the managing partners in shedding light on gender disparity of career success in the legal profession. The recommendations for change that she set forth lay out actions that should be implemented by law firms in allowing women their “rightful place as equals in the legal profession” (p. 7).

#### Future Research Needs

What Rikleen (2006) did for the legal profession is what is sorely lacking in the literature on women in law enforcement. While it is encouraging to learn about the instances in which women have reached the top positions in law enforcement, there is a need for research that focuses on the barriers that preclude successful advancement for women. This research study will be distinguished by the depth and richness of the interview data that will be gathered as well as by its focus. The focus of the investigation will seek to reveal problems and inequities that should be acknowledged rather than simply applauding the meritorious successes that have been demonstrated by a few outstanding women.

More in-depth analyses of the predicaments faced by qualified women whose career paths are blocked are required in order to understand the specific problems that women face in advancing to the top level of law enforcement leadership. Such critical research on the advancement of women in law enforcement is needed to provide an assessment of the situation with an eye for needed reform.

The literature review indicates that focus in the area has been placed on the success stories of women who have reached the top in law enforcement to become chief of a department. This research will differ in that it will study the women who have either

tried to become chief and failed or who are in line to become chief and face obstacles to their advancement. The project will provide for law enforcement an approach similar to that provided by Rikleen for the legal profession by presenting case study data from women who “ran the gauntlet” in law enforcement and also from top male leaders who will be found in some instances to have different perspectives.

The research should provide insight into the reasons that the policy efforts as far back as 1976 of the National Council on Crime and Delinquency have not been fully implemented. The study should allow for development of procedures to aid in the advancement of women to the top levels of law enforcement, thereby more completely fulfilling the policy initiatives laid out by the Council three decades ago.

### **CHAPTER III: STUDY DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

This chapter describes the research design and methodology used in the study of the obstacles faced by women in moving to the top of their organizations in law enforcement. Chapter II provided an overview of the relevant literature on the topic. Chapters IV and V present the results of the present research. This chapter explains the approach that was used in generating data for the current study.

#### **Research Design and Methodology**

Qualitative research techniques allow for deeper understanding of phenomena due to the assumptions underlying this process of scientific research. Creswell (1994) noted five assumptions that guide good qualitative studies: “the multiple nature of reality, the close relationship of the researcher to that being researched, the value-laden aspect of inquiry, the personal approach to writing the narrative, and the emerging inductive methodology of the process of research” (p. 73).

As described by Creswell, these assumptions have the following characteristics that lead to greater understanding due to their implications for the practice of research (p. 75 - 78):

1. The assumption of multiple realities leads to the view of reality as subjective as seen by the study participants and revealed through the use of quotes and themes.
2. The assumption of the close relationship between the researcher and the participants leads to closer proximity due to the researcher collaborating with and spending time with the individuals being researched.

3. The assumption of the role of values leads the researcher toward acknowledging that values and biases exist and discussing these openly in data interpretation.
4. The assumption of the personal narrative approach in writing leads to a personal style of writing that employs the language of qualitative research.
5. The assumption of inductive methodology leads to a study of the topic within its context, initially detailing particular observations before making generalizations and then continuing to revise questions due to further field experiences.

The qualitative researcher will choose to employ the techniques of this methodology in certain instances due to the personal concerns the researcher holds about the topic.

These personal concerns may reflect a heartfelt need to promote social action, to lift the “voices” of marginalized or oppressed people, to explore gender issues that have served to dominate and repress women, or to bring about general change in our society (Creswell, 1994, p. 78).

It is for these reasons that qualitative inquiry was utilized for the current research project. The statistics on women in police chief positions reveal that there are far fewer women in these positions than there should be considering the number of women in the pipeline and the amount of time since women first entered the law enforcement profession. From a reading of the literature and the initial interviews that were conducted as a pilot study, it is evident that glass-ceiling type barriers exist that prevent many women from breaking through to the top of law enforcement organizations.

The difficulties that women have faced in advancing to the position of chief can most clearly and fully be revealed through the perspective of qualitative research. Only through understanding the many facets of the experiences of women who have encountered discrimination in attempting to move upwards in their organizations can the realities of the situation be revealed. Furthermore, since women who are victimized may sometimes tend to avoid recognition of the underlying nature of their experiences and to engage in the processes of denial, a quantitative approach may not allow for uncovering of the true situation, or for clear expression of the depth of experiences of the women who encountered gender-related opposition to their career advancement.

For purposes of answering the research questions and learning about the career barriers faced by women in law enforcement and the advancement strategies that could best be employed, in-depth qualitative research can provide the most meaningful type of answers. Although some related scholarly research has been done in this area by Gold (1999), Collins and Scarborough (2002), and Schulz (2004), the present study provides a more intensive and deeper examination than the type of methodology that those researchers employed, leading to results that differ in various ways. Generally, this study makes the contribution that the others do not make, of providing confidential in-depth interviews, data on alternative viewpoints, and clearly delineated useful advice for other women. The distinctions between the current research and each of those three studies will be explained below.

Gold's (1999) research was different in its methodology in that it did not focus on women moving into the highest rank in law enforcement, i.e. the chief position. Most of the women interviewed were at the lower executive levels. Also, the interviews were not

confidential, and the identities were revealed. For these reasons, the results were different from the current research. While some of the barriers that women face in advancing to upper levels of law enforcement were indicated by Gold, the recounting of the experiences that women have in this regard will not as likely be as forthright when their identities are revealed.

Collins and Scarborough (2002) also provided research that differed in methodological approach from that of the current research. Their research was not restricted to executive level women and also included women in security organizations. Although also utilizing snowball sampling, their research methodology differed from that of both Gold's and the current research because it was limited to short telephone surveys, not in-depth personal interviews. Collins and Scarborough's (2002) findings also pinpointed some of the same barriers to advancement, yet did not reveal many of the barriers that were uncovered in the current study. Also, they did not provide any advice about strategies for overcoming the obstacles other than to ask specifically about mentoring.

Schulz (2004) utilized a methodology dissimilar to the current research in that much of the data were obtained from questionnaires that included closed-ended questions. The interviews that were provided were collected in a more casual nature such as in conversations or communications with acquaintances, listening to conference presenters, or through secondary media sources.

Although they were interviews of women at the chief level, the interviews conducted by Schulz (2004) were not confidential and thus also tended to be of a tributary nature. Again, the extent of the obstacles that women in this situation face is not



easily disclosed unless confidential interviewing techniques are used. Also, means of overcoming barriers were not outlined. The emphasis was on the general difficulties that certain outstanding women encountered and overcame. Therefore, the findings are not as in-depth as the current research neither by describing barriers nor offering advancement strategies.

### *Data Collection*

*Participants.* Three types of participants comprised the sample, and there were a total of seventeen people interviewed. Altogether, these seventeen included nine interviews of primary participants, i.e. women who are chief or in position to be chief, six “alternative perspective” interviews of male chiefs, one interview of a woman police captain, and one interview of a retired female chief.

The primary participants were women who had encountered glass ceiling type barriers in their attempts to move up the ranks to the top level of law enforcement. They were all currently employed in law enforcement agencies in urban areas in the United States.

There were two other types of participants in this research who provided supplementary data:

1. Male chiefs of departments in which some of the women participants were currently or previously employed, or in organizations where they attempted to become chief, were interviewed in some cases. In total, six male chiefs were interviewed.
2. There were two additional supplementary interviews. The first was of a woman police captain in a lower position in her organization than the primary

participants were in their organizations. She was interviewed to assess the perspective from her position about the existence of the glass ceiling in law enforcement. The second interview was of a retired police chief and current director of an organization for women executives in law enforcement. She was interviewed for her professional expertise and years of experience. To assist in understanding the data gained from these interviews, supplementary written materials and artifacts were also studied to complete the picture.

*Selection Criteria for Primary Participants.* The participants selected for the primary interviews were nine women in leadership positions in city, county, or college campus law enforcement agencies in urban areas in the United States who have met the organizational requirements to be in line to be considered for appointment to the position of chief. They may presently be in a chief position, may have become chief and left the position, may have applied for the chief position and failed to receive it, or they may have been considering future application for the chief position. The participants were selected based upon their organizational positions and their attempts to advance, thus providing them exposure to the appointment process. They reside throughout the United States, primarily in southern California but also in northern California, the Southwest, the Midwest, and the East Coast.

*The Recruitment of the Primary Participants.* The participants were identified through background research or networking with contacts in the law enforcement field who identified the participants as candidates who have been or could likely become involved in the process of selection for a chief level position. This is known as the “snowballing” or “chain” sampling technique of soliciting recommended informants by

obtaining new contacts from each person interviewed (Patton, 2001, p. 237). Patton defined this technique as “an approach for locating information-rich key informants or critical cases” (p. 237). Participant recruitment began by contacting the two participants from the pilot study.

A pilot study was conducted in 2002-2003 as part of the requirements of two qualitative research methodology courses (Meistrich, 2003). That research was similar in nature to the research design proposed in this document. A brief description of the pilot study and its results was provided in Chapter I.

The participants interviewed in the pilot study were in leadership positions in a municipal police department and were exposed to the advancement process. Those participants were asked to provide referrals to other women who may have faced obstacles in their attempts to advance to the top levels of law enforcement agencies. Thus, the networking process was initiated. Snowballing resulted in these two individuals recommending additional possible participants.

Participants for this study were also identified through other proactive methods, such as searching popular media sources for information on participants who met the requirements for this study. Additional contacts were made with some professional organizations in order to solicit appropriate participants. Included were organizations such as: National Association of Women Law Enforcement Executives (NAWLEE), International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), International Association of Women Police (IAWP), and Women in Federal Law Enforcement (WIFLE).

*Research Role of Supplementary Participants.* Data enhancement resulted from the interviews of other parties, including males and females in positional authority, to

include their views and to help arrive at narrative consistency. In this way, the accuracy of the data was ascertained. A procedure that was used in this research to further triangulate and to find support for the data obtained from primary participants is termed "*alternative perspective interviews*." This is a term developed by the writer and is intended to provide an umbrella-type reference to the supplementary interviews.

These interviews allowed for enhanced credibility through uncovering similar perspectives or contrasting interpretations of reality, thereby adding to the portrait painted by others and providing an expansion of the accounting of experiences. This data enhancement was accomplished by incorporating viewpoints and information that can be obtained from others who may not meet the selection requirements of the primary participants.

For purposes of expanding the data, sometimes one other individual was interviewed from the law enforcement agencies studied to either support or provide alternate perspectives on the situation. These additional individuals were chosen either because they were known to have oppositional views to that of the primary participant or because they were in an authority position that provided them with extensive knowledge of the selection process. An effort was made to include male perspectives to contrast or compare their perspectives with those of the women participants. A primary purpose of these interviews was to learn what male executives in the departments feel about the advancement of women to the chief position.

The "alternative perspective" interviews were of chiefs or individuals of high rank. "Alternative perspective" interviewing included general questioning about perceptions of the advancement of women in the department generally, the role of women

as top leaders in law enforcement agencies, and soliciting advice for women who aspire to such positions (see Appendix D for sample questions). Data resulting from the alternative perspective interviews are reported in Chapter V.

The inclusion of these “alternative perspective” interviews expanded the scope of the study. The scope was also broadened in two other ways. A woman police captain who was in an organizational position one step below that needed to compete for a chief’s position was interviewed and her perspectives as a less senior executive were reported. Also, a retired police chief who now serves in an executive position at a law enforcement organization for women was sought for her knowledge and experience concerning selection of women for positions as chief.

*The Use of Volunteer Participants.* The participants in this study were informed that their participation was voluntary and that their identity would be kept anonymous. For this reason, a pseudonym was assigned to each of them. The participants were given consent forms to assure their participation in the interview process was voluntary. Informed consent can aid this type of research project by serving to empower the participant (Glesne, 1999:116). The consent form was fully explained to the participants in a manner in which they understood the intended use of the data (see Appendix A).

Ethical considerations were always at the forefront in this research project. “Ethics is not something that you can forget once you satisfy the demands of institutional review boards and other gatekeepers of research conduct” (Glesne, 1999:113). Ethical considerations were behind every instance of interaction with the participants and every decision concerning the data. In fact, in such critical research, the participants are considered as partners in the research process (Glesne, 1999:113-114).

For example, in several instances, the participants inquired about the responses that had been made by other women. This was particularly true in the cases where networking procedures had been utilized. The participants sometimes inquired as to the information that other women had revealed. In all of these instances, great care was taken to explain that confidentiality was being taken seriously in the study, and the participants were drawn into agreement that the information provided by each should not be shared with the others.

*The Role of the Researcher and the Participants.* In fulfillment of the partnership approach, the participants were apprised of the focus of the research and led into discussion of the issues. The interviews were informal to the extent that rapport was established in order that the participants were willing to explore personal areas relevant to the nature of the inquiry, i.e. the barriers to their career advancement. Occasionally shifting into a friendly conversational style increased the comfort and cooperation of the participants (Spradley, 1979, p. 58-59).

*Interviewing Procedures.* Two interviews were held with each primary participant, either face-to-face or via telephone, depending on where the participants were physically located. Initial interviews usually lasted 60 to 90 minutes maximum to avoid diminishing returns from the impact of a lengthy interview on either party (Glesne, 1999, p. 78). Follow-up interviews of shorter length probed into any areas that needed clarification and delved into concerns relating to the topic that did not develop in the initial conversational phase. With participant approval, the interviews were audiotaped and transcribed into written format by a transcriptionist for subsequent analysis of the interview data.

Every effort was made to provide confidentiality. Interviews took place in closed-door offices or over the telephone for those participants for whom face-to-face interviews were difficult. All materials are kept in a private location. Data are stored in a locked facility, and electronic data are maintained in a password-protected computer. Research records will be kept confidential for a period of five years, after which the data will be destroyed. Pseudonyms are used, although the consent form alerted the participants to the possibility that complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed due to the nature of the stories and the small number of individuals in professional positions such as that of these participants. Of course, there was no financial cost to the participants.

*The Interview Questions.* The data were obtained primarily through interviews utilizing open-ended questions. A semi-structured interview guide was followed. See Appendix B for the primary interview questions and Appendix C for samples of follow-up questions. The sequencing of questions involved initial descriptive questions, building toward questions that involve opinions and feelings (Patton, 2002, p. 352). "Opinions and feelings are likely to be more grounded and meaningful once the respondent has verbally "relived" the experience" (Patton, 2002, p. 352). The interview began with a grand tour question and funneled into specific grand tour and mini-tour questions (Spradley, 1979, p. 86-88). The questions included example and experience questions to focus the respondent on specific cases and particular experiences.

Throughout the interview, probes were used to stimulate the respondent to produce more and richer data. Probes may be silent in order to leave time for reflection, or they may be verbal and range from a single word to full sentences (Glesne, 1999, p. 87).

Rapport and neutrality were established with the probing questions by showing respect and empathy and by not giving indication of any emotional reaction to the responses (Patton, p. 365-366). Hypothetical questions in the form of illustrative examples were utilized when needed as a clarifying strategy.

The research questions were systematically answered through analysis of the related interview questions in the first interview. The second interviews consisted of a less systematic approach for follow-up purposes. The “alternative perspective” interviews of other individuals in the agencies attempted to provide information related to each of the research questions.

The first two questions in the first interview and the first question in the alternative perspective interview were general background questions to lay the framework for the remainder of the interview. The correspondence between the research questions and interview questions is explained below through indication of the questions in the two primary interview protocols (i.e. Appendices B for the primary participants and D for the alternative perspective interviews) that relate to each research question.

The research questions were provided in Chapter I. They are listed again below in order more easily to show the connection between them and the interview questions:

1. What are the perceived issues and problems articulated by women officers who are in high command positions and attempting to move to even higher levels?
2. What are the perceived strategies employed by high-ranking women law enforcement leaders as they attempt to reach the highest levels?
3. What different strategies could future generations of women police executives use to achieve more effective results in reaching the chief position?



The connections between the research and interview questions are detailed below, with the relevant questions from Appendix D relating to the alternative perspective interviews, indicated in parentheses:

1. Research Question One: Interview questions 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 (2)
2. Research Question Two: Interview questions 9, 10 (3)
3. Research Question Three: Interview questions 11, 12 (4)

*Reliability and Validity.* Although the number of participants may be considered small, this research is thought to be meaningful because of the way in which the study was conducted. A sample size does not have to be large in order to present qualitative data of significance. As emphasized by Patton (2002): “the validity, meaningfulness, and insights generated from qualitative inquiry have more to do with the information richness of the cases selected and the observational/analytical capabilities of the researcher than with the sample size” (p. 245).

Various methods were used to help ensure the accuracy of the findings. Artifacts were collected from the participants as well as through internet searches. Such artifacts and materials as departmental policies or news accounts provided background information. Such items as organizational procedures, letters, articles or clippings are considered as supplementary data (Patton, 2002, p. 247).

Confidentiality concerns also apply in the keeping of these materials. Because data such as internet articles about the participants would display their identity, such data cannot be attached as appendices to this document and are kept in a file in a locked cabinet until such time as they will be shredded and destroyed.

Mixing different types of purposive samples such as qualitative and print samples supports data within a qualitative inquiry, providing cross-data validity checks (Patton, p. 248). Additionally, the use of follow-up interviews and the interviewing of other participants in the same department increases confidence in the data.

Furthermore, the participants were offered the opportunity to review the interview transcripts. Such member-checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) increased internal validity by giving the participants the opportunity to clarify or correct any statements that were attributed to them. Data on the participant interviews are reported in Chapter IV.

*The Risks and Benefits.* The interview procedure could have brought up concerns that would be distressing to the participants. No participant was prodded if she or he seemed reluctant or distraught. Quite the opposite, benefits seemed to accrue to the participants through the exchange provided by the conversation. The conversations were enlightening and thought-provoking. In fact, this research in some cases seemed to provide to the participants the gift of learning about themselves through understanding others. Through the process of reflecting on self and others, a participant should expect to acquire new insights and perspectives on crucial aspects of human interaction (Glesne, 1999, p. 158). From follow-up conversations, it appeared that some of the participants benefited in this regard.

This research benefits not only the academic goals of adding to the literature, but it also benefits women in law enforcement who have experienced struggles in advancement, women who aspire to reach higher levels in law enforcement, and women in other professions who have faced or who will encounter similar dilemmas. Women who have had similar experiences to these participants may take comfort in the

knowledge that others faced similar situations. Women who aspire to move upwards can learn from the experiences and advice of the more senior women, in essence benefiting from an indirect mentoring. And women in professions outside of law enforcement may be able to apply the general lessons learned to their specific situations.

There are benefits to law enforcement organizations themselves that may undergo changes that could result from either the interviews or through subsequent publications based on this research. The research will reveal inherent problems in law enforcement organizations for which solutions should be sought in order that more women have equitable and fair opportunities to lead agencies for the benefit of the community as well as for purposes of gender equity.

#### *Data Analysis*

While reliability can be enhanced through appropriate data collection, the validity of qualitative research often depends upon credible interpretation during data analysis. "Validity in qualitative research has to do with description and explanation and whether or not the explanation fits the description" (Janesick, 2000, p. 393). The researcher in this study took into account that qualitative data analysis involves "reducing the volume of raw information, sifting trivia from significance, identifying significant patterns, and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal" (Patton, p. 432). A basic qualitative researcher's rule was followed: "Do your very best with your full intellect to fairly represent the data and communicate what the data reveal given the purpose of the study" (Patton, p. 433).

The data are presented in case study format. The data consist of the barriers that are encountered by women who could attempt or have attempted to advance to the chief

position in law enforcement agencies. The participants described the barriers that women police officers frequently encounter when they attempt to reach the chief of police level. These barriers and resulting struggles became the focus for the interviews of the nine women.

The data were analyzed using Lincoln and Guba's (1985) inductive method to reveal the difficulties encountered by women as they attempt to move up the organizational ladder in law enforcement agencies. The reporting of similar experiences and viewpoints were pinpointed to acknowledge patterns of discrimination and to identify common barriers. Unitizing by finding heuristic elements and categorizing to establish similarities revealed theoretical categories and relational propositions (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

The data were coded, and cover terms and included terms were searched for (Spradley, 1979, p. 107). Specifically, data were coded by extracting answers to the research questions from the interviews. Barriers to equal opportunities and advancement strategies either utilized or suggested were identified. They were then labeled in ways that would allow for similarities to be shown and linkages to be made. Analysis of recurrent themes allows for understanding of general cultural patterns (Spradley, p. 185). The barriers to advancement faced by the women, not the individual participants, were considered as the cases for analysis. From the data provided by the women, common barriers to advancement were depicted and used in thematic analysis (Spradley, p.190).

Summaries and conclusions were drawn from the data collection. Suggestions are proposed for women in law enforcement who will be attempting to reach the top level of

their organizations. Techniques of overcoming the barriers and reaching success goals were studied in order to ascertain effective solutions.

Women who have had struggles in attempting to reach the chief position in law enforcement should be in a position to provide “lessons learned” that will be valuable to those coming up the ladder in the same field. Advice and suggestions were drawn from the interviews and compared with comments made by others and integrated with ideas derived from the literature review.

#### Limitations to the Study

There are some limitations to this study that should be acknowledged. First is the nature of self-report that is inherent in qualitative study. This type of research relies on the quality of the data that the participants provided. Qualitative data of this sort inherently is impacted by the individual opinions of the participants. Factors such as honesty and self-awareness certainly affected the type of responses made by the participants. The primary participants could have used the study to advance themselves, or there could have been bias on the part of other participants to discredit the struggles. The researcher attempted to be vigilant in assessing the motives of the participants.

Second is the researcher bias and subjectivity that may exist in interpretation of the data or interviewing of participants. The researcher attempted to remain objective in eliciting and reporting information, and free of personal opinion that could have affected the end result.

Third is the inherent problem in telephone interviewing that was necessary in some cases. A less personal relationship may occur between interviewer and participant when face-to-face interaction is absent. The researcher attempted to develop an open

relationship with participants who were interviewed via telephone. More time was taken at the start of the interview to establish a comfortable relationship in which candid responses would more easily flow.

Fourth is the sample size and generalizability of the data resulting from this research. Qualitative research by nature provides more in-depth and richer data than is usually available from quantitative data, but suffers from the time limitations that necessitate fewer participants than do other types of research. The sample size in this research is smaller than would be true for a quantitative study or possibly even a less intensive interview approach. The researcher made efforts to select participants that match the sample requirements, but still can only generalize to women in organizations in similar settings.

#### Significance of the Study

There are many benefits to women and to society from this study because of the importance of examining the impediments that make it difficult for women to reach the top in law enforcement. The study sought to offer insight into why so few women have been able to reach the pinnacle of their law enforcement organizations. Suggestions and advice to women moving up in the ranks in law enforcement are useful for both the women and the law enforcement field itself. This study is significant because it differs from other research by its more rigorous methodological approach, richness of data through supplementary interviews with male chiefs and others who may hold alternative viewpoints, explicit and comprehensive advice offered to women, and its reliance on confidential interviews that reveal deeper understanding about the barriers that women

face and the impact that the resulting struggles have on them personally as well as professionally.

## **CHAPTER IV: THE FINDINGS, PART I - PRIMARY PARTICIPANTS**

The case studies of each of nine primary participants are provided in this chapter. These participants were all women in leadership positions in city or county law enforcement agencies in metropolitan areas of the United States who have matched the organizational requirements to be in line to be considered for appointment to the position of chief. They may have applied for the position and failed to receive it, or they may be considering future application for the chief position, or both situations may apply.

The participants were selected based upon their attempts to advance, thus providing them exposure to the appointment process. They reside throughout the United States, primarily in Southern California but also in Northern California, the Southwest and the Midwest.

These women were interviewed in order to examine the barriers that women police officers of high rank encounter when they are in positions to reach the chief of police level. The factors that arose to create struggles as they attempted to reach the top were explored during the interviews. (See Appendices B and C for sample questions.)

Chapter V will provide the results of supplementary interviews, including “alternative perspective” interviews. The chapter will also present two interviews of women in law enforcement who were deemed not to meet the positional requirements for inclusion as primary participants, but who provided meaningful data nevertheless.

The data in this chapter are organized according to the answers provided for this study’s research questions. However, in each case there is a short introductory section on the participant’s background. This introductory section termed “Organizational Role and Career Background” has the same three subsections for each participant. These three



subsections are personal sacrifices, leadership struggles, and attempts to become chief. The introductory section is followed by three main sections for each case study, and the information is organized according to the research questions (see Chapter III for a detailed description of the research questions). The three main sections that relate to the research questions are:

1. Advancement Issues. The issues and problems each participant experienced in advancing into leadership positions in law enforcement.
2. Utilized Strategies. The strategies each participant attempted to utilize to advance in their career.
3. Suggested Strategies. The strategies each participant suggested for future women leaders in law enforcement.

Within each of the three main sections, there will be subsections that will vary by case. These subsections vary because the participants provided different responses to questioning. The subsections relate to the responses given. In some cases, the subsections will be similar, reflecting the fact that some issues were discussed by more than one participant. See Table 4.1 for a comparison of the information provided by each case study in relation to the research questions. The table displays the issues raised by each participant, and the items in the table relate to the subsections for the narrative provided for each of the cases.

Finally, there will be a concluding section on each participant's view of the future, entitled "Perspectives on the Future of Women Leaders in Law Enforcement." Therefore, there will be a total of five main sections on each participant.

It should be noted that in some of the quoted material, there are instances of

Table 4.1

*Participants responses relating to research questions*

CASE STUDIES	ADVANCEMENT ISSUES	STRATEGIES	
		UTILIZED	SUGGESTED
EVELYN	Subordination of Identity Old Boys Club Victim's Denial Double Standard Women Discriminating	Be Straightforward Push It Back	Mentoring Commitment Watch Out Expect Rumors Be Prepared
HAZEL	Double Standard	Learn From Mistakes Effective Leadership Know When to Leave Listen to the Truth	Mentoring Don't Worry Team Player Avoid Resistance
LOLA	Racial Discrimination Victim's Denial Double Standard Women Discriminating	Turn to Family Be Positive	Believe in Self
NAILA	Racial Discrimination Women Discriminating	Be Competent Forgive & Forget	Mentoring Be Perseverant Education Make Sacrifices
PRUDENCE	Rumors Work Assignments Physical Size Old Boys Club Women Discriminating	Grow in Organization Gain Staff Support Be Direct	Education Make A Mark Go To Person Support Others

Table 4.1

*Participants responses relating to research questions (continued)*

CASE STUDIES	ADVANCEMENT ISSUES	STRATEGIES	
		UTILIZED	SUGGESTED
QUINN	Subordination of Identity Old Boys Club Women Discriminating	Confidence/ Experience	Opportunities Mentoring
RAMONA	Old Boys Club Double Standard	Married to Cop Mentoring	Keep Head High Reputation Perseverance
STELLA	Old Boys Club Double Standard	Effective Leadership Mentoring	Commitment Education
WINIFRED	Old Boys Club Double Standard	Effective Leadership Gain Respect	Learn the Job Be Straight Learning Decision Maker Outside Interests

language that may be considered objectionable to some. These quotations were not selected in order to provide sensationalism, but in the instances where off-color language was used by the participant, such language was included in their quoted statements. The purpose of this is to capture the essence of the life of the participants and to make the facets of their social world clearer to the reader.

Pseudonyms were assigned to each of the participants as well as to their organizations and to any individuals they mentioned who were important enough to the cases to be mentioned by name. The pseudonyms were selected from a reference list of names and their meanings. Pseudonyms were chosen because their meanings were pertinent to the roles of strong women, or in some cases because the meanings were germane to the individuality of the participant. Sometimes the pseudonyms were true to the ethnic background. However, in no cases would the pseudonyms betray the identities of the women.

Attaching meaningful pseudonyms in qualitative research is one way in which the human nature of the participant can be manifested. Janesick (2000) noted that “somehow we have lost the human and passionate element of research (p. 394).” The element of passion in research is possible through understanding people, and the use of befitting pseudonyms helps to humanize the data and avoid treating the participants as less than the unique individuals they are. As aptly described by Janesick (2000), “We need to capture the lived experience of individuals and their stories, much like the choreographer who crafts a dance” (p. 394). The case studies provided below attempt to capture the experiences lived by these courageous and valiant female pioneers.

Case Study One: Evelyn (A pseudonym: meaning *lively or pleasant*)

*Organizational Role and Career Background*

Presently an executive in private industry and holding a law degree, Evelyn joined the EPD in the 1980's and left there more than twenty years later. She began in the EPD as a patrol officer and worked many different assignments, promoting quickly through the organization. She made commander in 17 years, becoming at that point, the first female commander in the history of the EPD. Commander is the third highest rank in that organization. Evelyn was one of the top people in a very large organization. She remained as a commander for six years, but was not promoted to deputy chief due to a new police chief coming into the organization.

The chief, who came in after Evelyn had been appointed to commander, eventually bypassed Evelyn by promoting another woman, Freida, to commander and then to deputy chief. Evelyn then competed for chief at the EPD and lost. The subsequent chief did not promote Evelyn or any other woman to the deputy chief position. Evelyn decided to leave the EPD when the opportunity came for her to realize her dream to become a chief, and she assumed command of the FPD, a medium sized law enforcement organization.

Eventually, Evelyn left to work as an executive in private industry. She currently has a gender discrimination lawsuit pending against the FPD where she had served for a very short time in the chief position that she had long awaited, but which she left after only 18 months of service.

*Personal Sacrifices Made for Career Advancement.* Although currently married, Evelyn felt that she made relationship sacrifices and child-bearing decisions in order to

advance her career. “I made the decision to put off having children because of the career, and when I made the decision to finally have children around the age of 37 or 38, I couldn’t.”

*Leadership Struggles.* Evelyn said that she had always been considered a leader, even in high school and college. She had been the president of many organizations, and generally had been requested by others to be in charge, rather than her seeking out the leadership roles. Her leadership capability spilled over into her law enforcement career: “I’m a very strong leader. I’m relatively intelligent. I have a package that most people scream for because I’ve worked so many different assignments, and I had a good working understanding of politics of the city at the time.”

Perceiving herself as a charismatic leader, Evelyn was aware of the strong impact that she had on her followers, and she took that role seriously:

In leading, if you don’t lead in a way that makes people trust you or be honest, then there is a lack of trust that occurs and then they don’t follow as well. I’m a charismatic leader. I am a leader who is a visionary, and I picture a vision that everyone can see and wants to follow. But if that vision turns out along the way to be false in any way, the followers will be more hurt by the fact that it was slightly false than if someone who is disingenuous comes in and lies to them the whole time and it turns out to be false. Because they have given themselves over to me.

And that’s the problem with being a charismatic leader. Charismatic leaders get people to follow you because they believe in you, versus other non-charismatic leaders, they follow the position. So when it doesn’t work out, then they are more hurt by you because they have invested themselves

in you. People invest themselves in me. They become invested in my success because my success is their success, and if I'm disingenuous they are also hurt because I am not who they thought I was. So it was very important to me to be who I am – all the time.

Evelyn elaborated on the visionary aspect of her leadership style: "When I see a vision, I go after it. And a lot of people jump on board and other people are scared to death of it." She explained the importance of being genuine, a topic that will be addressed more later in a discussion of the subordination of the female identity in law enforcement:

I also believe that I am less effective if I am not myself. Because when you lead differently than whom you are, then it comes across as disingenuous. Whether or not your followers realize it, in the back of their minds they're hearing something, your mannerisms, or the way you present yourself is somehow false to them.

A true leader, Evelyn had the goal of being at the top of an organization and she easily acknowledged her desire to head a law enforcement agency:

What I realized is that as an individual leading within an organization, you're not truly leading until you're at the top of the organization. Because it didn't matter what my vision was, I always have to carry on the vision of the chief.

*Attempts to Become Chief.* Because Evelyn wanted to be chief and felt that the time was right for her, that it was her "window," she decided to leave EPD and to apply for chief of a different, smaller police department. She informed the chief to whom she reported of her intentions to apply elsewhere, and he encouraged her to do so, implying that she would not easily or quickly promote much further at the EPD.

Evelyn did not get the chief position that she then applied for, nor did she have

successful attempts in several more efforts to locate a chief position. As noted before, she was finally awarded a position as chief of the FPD, a smaller, but very important, agency.

Evelyn reported that problems eventually arose in her tenure as chief in the new position at FPD because she was not given the latitude to fulfill her responsibilities and was not given the trust that she needed. She was required to get approval for decisions that she felt should have fallen within her sphere of authority, and this caused her to lose face with her followers.

*Research Issue One: Advancement Issues for Women in Law Enforcement*

*Perception of Gender-Related Discrimination.* Evelyn reflected upon the gender discrimination that she had perceived as a female in law enforcement. For one thing, she felt that the reason that Freida eventually was promoted to assistant chief at EPD instead of her was because Freida posed less of a threat to the men and would, therefore, be more acceptable as “the female that represented women in law enforcement” because she was not an insider. Consequently, she would not have as much power as the men had. Evelyn was of the opinion that Frieda “would not have yet been able to garner much power and, by the simple fact that she had not been in EPD and grown up in the organization, she would have been marginalized. “

Freida’s promotion sent a message to Evelyn, as did the promotion of six men to deputy chief while Evelyn had more tenure. “So after a number of promotions where Gabriel decided to promote everybody *but* me, I kind of saw the writing on the wall that something was going on. I couldn’t figure out what the process was or why.” Evelyn could not account for why men who had been a commander for only one year were promoted to deputy chief, bypassing her while she was the second-most tenured



commander and had done a good job. The only explanation that made sense to her was “I knew that I was a good leader, and I knew that part of it was because I had spent so many years at the EPD that I frankly was a threat and the others were not.”

*Subordination of the Female Identity.* Evelyn drew a parallel between law-enforcement and the military in that the process is designed to make one lose their identity and become merged into the organizational culture. She stated:

So, at least when I went through, it was designed to make you bend so much that you couldn't tell yourself from one or the other. To lose your identity, let's call it that. I never lost my identity. I probably let my identity be subordinated for a period of time because it was a survival mechanism for myself, but I never lost it completely.

So as I got higher and higher in the organization, what I recognized was it was important for me to maintain my identity, because if I didn't maintain my identity, if I wasn't who I was, and I simply subordinated me and myself and my style and everything about me to be so much like EPD, then what benefit am I bringing to the organization, first off, because I believe that part of the benefit that I bring to the organization is my difference. And the other part was that I believe that other women then would have to subordinate their identity in order to succeed. Because if I succeeded by being somebody else, then they would have to do the same.

Evelyn felt that being yourself is one of the hardest challenges for women in law enforcement. She felt that it was very important to try to be true to herself because of the impact on future women leaders: “If I now become something else, then every woman

has to become something else in order to achieve or succeed in the same way. And they will judge every other woman behind me by that.”

Evelyn felt this subordination of one's identity was a crucial point particularly in preventing women from keeping their female identity. She described it this way:

In a law enforcement organization, women have to fight two battles. First off, if they're too feminine, they're not strong enough to be a cop, certainly in the EPD. If you're too masculine in your presentation, then you're not accepted because you're not feminine enough. You've lost; you're not a woman any more. So there has to be this kind of thin little road that you drive that if you are a feminine and attractive woman, you have to still be somewhat masculine in your approach in order to be accepted. You have to be able to rough and tough it. You've got to be able to fight. But not appear too aggressive. You've got to do it at both ends.

Evelyn considered herself to be a happy, positive, upbeat, and strong person who had to change her personality to appear more serious and less assertive. She recognized that in the early stages of her career, assertive women were criticized as “aggressive.” She felt that she had to appear both less feminine and less assertive because the two qualities did not appear congruous to others and made it hard for her to be accepted as herself. “So I had to try to modify myself for a period of time.”

The large organizational environment of the EPD where she was Commander was very “controlling and homogenous.” Evelyn pointed out that “everybody fit in eventually in order to become part of it, so you lost your identity.”

But eventually when she was ready to take her turn at leadership, she wanted to

do it on her terms. Speaking generally about the interview process in competing for a chief position, Evelyn explained:

One thing that happens when you go through a chief's process is you are not always yourself in the process. Because if you are too much yourself, you might kill your chance, and you try to be more in the middle – acceptable – so that they pick you. For me, however, I went into the process saying: "This is who I am. I have made this decision I will be no one else any more. I will not be in the box I was in before. I will be the leader I know I am in the way that I know I can be."

My personality will not be subordinated. I will not be quiet. I will be animated (because EPD wanted you not to be animated, and I'm very animated). I gesture a lot; I have a lot of intonation in my voice. I will be that person through the whole process because it's so if they select *that person* – they have selected me. And everything I am. And I will not change it so that I get the job. I get the job because I'm me, not because they wanted that other person that I showed them.

Evelyn had thought that she went through the process and was selected for who she was, but in the end she was not really allowed the opportunity to lead in her own way.

In discussing her problems as chief with the FPD, she confided that the people she reported to would not allow her to lead independently and would pull her back after she had made reports to her staff. Rather than letting her get the results, they essentially micromanaged her efforts. The result in Evelyn's mind was that her followers viewed her as "disingenuous" and it impacted the level of trust they had in her.

In her position at the FPD, Evelyn had hoped to utilize her visionary leadership

skills. The organization had a pre-existing morale problem, and she was attempting to change it. But the individual to whom she reported prevented her from moving forward with her efforts to lead. As Evelyn expressed it, she had to “Mother may I?” at every step, which she felt would essentially make her a “puppet,” and not a leader.

They wanted to show me how to lead cops, and I’ve been leading cops for 20-some years, and I can’t have people telling me how to lead cops. That’s why I left EPD, so I could lead cops the way I know I could. But then they wanted to tell me how to lead. So that’s really why I left FPD.

So, I left EPD because I wanted to be myself, and I left FPD because I couldn’t *not* be myself. Now that’s a problem. Because still to this day, there’s still a glass ceiling that says you have to fit within some sort of acceptable range of perception. For women that acceptable range is narrower, by the way. I think it’s wider for men. And the reason I think it’s narrower for a woman is because for the most part you’re still working around men. And they still, whether they like it or not or can think of it or not, in the back of the heads, they don’t realize that they are constantly looking at you as “who you should be,” not who you are. What they perceive a female chief should be, not what you are and how you should respond to them.

Evelyn expressed her opinion that men generally deal differently with female leaders than they do with male leaders:

If they don’t like a man, they deal with it. If they don’t like a woman they

internalize it. When you, as a woman, say you won't do something, men don't like to hear it. They want to hear you cajole, agree, conform, be subordinate. That is what she felt happened at the FPD, and she found it unacceptable. "I couldn't be a puppet. I was leading 150 cops. I can't be subordinate. The cops have to believe that their leader is a leader."

Evelyn also noted that her interpretation was that male subordinates have had a difficult time separating the fact that she was a woman from her being their boss. She felt that they showed emotions such as anger to her in a way that they would show it to their wife, mother, or sister. "They always attached it to a *woman* telling them to do something."

*The Old Boys Club in Law Enforcement Agencies.* Evelyn referred to the existence of the "Old Boys Club": "I think there are still some agencies out there that are *very much* old boys clubs, very much, and even if women do get to the top, the members of this club are happy whenever the women don't succeed. Sometimes it validates what they think of women." Sometimes, as Evelyn pointed out, this is even true in very subtle ways, and sometimes true for women, too.

But more importantly is that there are those that truly believe that they are open-minded, and don't have biases as they relate to women. But if you really look at how they do things and what they do, and if they really analyze themselves and are introspective, they would realize that their actions are different when it comes to women. And they won't admit that to themselves. And we as women won't admit that we're treating a woman differently than we're treating a man.

*The Victim's Denial of Gender Discrimination.* Even when some of the negative

reactions that she received from her male colleagues were openly hostile, Evelyn originally refused to recognize the discriminatory nature of some of the behaviors she was subjected to. Even when once as a police captain, she received a valentine from a subordinate saying “if you won’t be my valentine, then I guess a blow job is out of the question,” Evelyn remembered still having wanted to look at that as a subordinate having an issue with his manager, not as an act of gender-related discrimination.

Or when she was number one on the commander’s list and a letter came out saying “I don’t care, you fucking cunt; I’ll never follow you,” she still was reluctant to see it as gender-related hostility. She excused it by convincing herself that the men had a right to be upset because she was venturing into a “man’s world.”

She even accepted it when dead animals were left on top of her car, describing these incidents as just “mean things.” She mentally wrote it off as deserving it “because I was a woman where I shouldn’t be.”

Evelyn was very thoughtful about the issue of women refusing to acknowledge gender-related discrimination in law enforcement. She recognized that she, herself, had refused to do so, but had in time come to recognize it for what it is. “For years and years, I refused to believe that any of my struggles were because I was a woman. Refused to. Wouldn’t.” She explained that women don’t want to admit that they were discriminated against because then they become an outcast and are looked at as being “feminists.” She examined the perspective that women tend to have: “So the best way you can fit in is to *not* say that you’ve ever been discriminated against or anybody’s ever done anything bad to you. Otherwise, you don’t fit in!”

But at some point, this attempt at denial began to affect her in a more poignant

way. "To get to the top and feel it . . . it was more devastating, because I thought that we should be further along now."

At one point when Evelyn came out number one on a list for promotion to commander, the white males protested the list on the basis that it didn't show enough racial diversity (even though there were people of color above the rank of captain, but no woman above that rank). The men held up the appointment for six months on the basis of this claim of diversity as well as on the basis of a fabricated personal complaint about inappropriate behavior between Evelyn and the chief, a complaint that was shown to be unfounded after an extensive personnel investigation. Although Evelyn eventually received the promotion, she felt that the men did this "to hold up me being appointed off the list. To make sure I didn't get appointed! Because they could not believe that a woman could actually make commander."

As she reached the upper rungs of the EPD, Evelyn began to come to terms with the truth of gender discrimination. As she explained her need to face its existence in order to overcome it:

So the whole point is that if I say I never had problems, it wasn't because I was a woman, I'm again doing what I've always done, which is accepting and being subordinate to the culture, versus being true to myself.

Evelyn pointed out that many women can't afford to admit that they encounter gender discrimination because they need to promote and be a success, "and you can't be a success if you admit that in some way, shape or form, that because you're a woman, you have been held back, because then you admit you're not a success."

Evelyn stressed that this is a real problem for women in law enforcement. "You

won't get a woman to admit what's happening to them because then they will be ostracized within their own career as being a whiner." Evelyn had broken through the barriers of denial enough to recognize the truth of her experiences. "I ain't no whiner, but if you talk to people, they will tell you that the difficulties I have had is because I am a woman."

*The Double Standard.* And Evelyn noted the double standard that exists for acceptable behavior by men and women. Evelyn's friend had informed her that at one point when there was a meeting to discuss her promotion, some men were voicing their opinions against it because she was perceived as too harsh. And it was pointed out by others that she was not as harsh as some of the men.

Evelyn felt that this is demonstrative of her perception that one of the problems that people had with her was her strong personality. But she felt that a strong personality is necessary to succeed in law enforcement. "In this organization, if you don't have a strong personality, you don't have a strong ego, you don't have a strong sense of yourself; then you can't succeed."

Evelyn furthermore felt that people expected her to be less strong than men because it was appropriate for men, but didn't fit for her. Evelyn reported that people had told her that she had done nothing differently in her career than the man to whom they were comparing her, but he was considered to have been successful, while she was criticized. And she was certain that this had to do with gender and the double standard issues that exist.

*Women Discriminating Against Women.* Gender discrimination against women doesn't always come just from men. "I think that as a leader, the women are even harsher



on a female leader than the males are.” When probed for an explanation to this statement, Evelyn continued to explain:

In some ways, other women compare themselves to you, and in some ways they think you’re not doing it the way they would have done it, or maybe you haven’t done it the way they did. And in some ways, you’re competition for them; you’ve taken the light away from them.

Evelyn later described a situation where at the FPD she had brought in a female captain. Evelyn had been proud to bring a woman into the organization she led. There were few women in high positions in that organization, and Evelyn brought in Gail as the highest ranking woman in the organization other than herself.

Evelyn reported that she had been interested in mentoring Gail and helping her career since women traditionally have not had as many advancement opportunities in law enforcement as men have had. “So I was going to help a woman and bring her along and be proud of her. And she did me.” She not only tried to get Evelyn’s job, she created big problems for her. Evelyn would say nothing more on this topic. Her hurt was evident in that this was the one incident other than the pending lawsuit where she would not go into further explanations.

Evelyn also described noting early on in her career where women were competitive with each other and that competitiveness was encouraged by other men. “They wanted to see you fight with each other. They wanted to see catfights.” And Evelyn felt that most women bought into that, and it troubled her. “One of the things I feared was that we would become less effective as women in the law enforcement culture if we did that to each other.”

Evelyn noted that there was a desire among the men to get women not to support each other. She stated that women went along with this due to their low self-esteem or their need to fit in with the guys. Although the male officers did not seem to think that women generally should be police officers, they would use the approach of making a woman officer feel that she was considered by them to be an exception. Evelyn described that the men would essentially be saying: "We don't think women should be police officers, but you're okay." Evelyn felt that the positive outcome of this for the women was that "suddenly you've become special and in order to maintain that "specialness", you need to now put down all the other women." She termed the results of this a "queen bee" designation.

When Evelyn began to be promoted into officer levels, she felt that her responsibility to women required her to avoid engaging in this type of game. "And so I got more involved in moving women forward in law enforcement." When she was a lieutenant, Evelyn realized that she had the responsibility to "carry the female mantle" in her organization. She felt required to "make sure that all women have the ability to be themselves, do their job well, and not have to live with other women biting at them, the men biting at them, and then biting at themselves and changing their personalities in order to be able to fit in."

Evelyn related that at the time that she and two other females were competing for the chief position at EPD, the entire organization had wanted and even encouraged her and the other top two women commanders to fight. Evelyn and Frieda, one of the other two contenders, met and privately agreed to refuse to allow themselves to be pitted against each other." It's one of the major pitfalls of women in law enforcement, to engage

in that or to encourage that in any way.” Evelyn warned that this cat-fight phenomenon is so subtle that most women will not even recognize that they have engaged in it.

Evelyn recalled that there was at one time a statewide women’s police officer association where the women all “bad-mouthed” each other and accused others of getting promotions in undeserved ways. For that reason, Evelyn avoided such organizations. Knowing what type of organization was needed, Evelyn was one of a group of women who established a national association, one that had a stated purpose of providing mentoring.

*Research Issue Two: Advancement Strategies and Coping Mechanisms Utilized*

*Be Genuine.* Although she felt that being herself cost her the top leadership role that she had worked for so hard, Evelyn did not want success if she had to be “disingenuous,” as she referred to it. “The minute that I start conforming, I’ve lost myself and they can see it. They just wanted me to be somebody else. I couldn’t do that. Particularly because I had left the EPD needing to be myself.” In leaving her post at the FPD, Evelyn grappled with the decision:

What I struggled with at that point was, if I don’t stay here, will I be perceived as a failure, having gone out into the world to be a chief, or is it more important to be myself? So, do I once more make the decision to leave in order that I can blossom and bloom and reach my potential? Do I somehow modify myself to now kind of get through this all, or do I realize that’s why I left the first time, and I can’t do that any more. I decided that as a person, I can’t afford to lose myself because that causes me *more* stress to now try to go back and be something else they want me

to be. Or, does it cause me more stress that my colleagues might think I've failed?

Which one is the worst stress? To me it was not being myself.

There were various facets to the idea of being genuine, as Evelyn continually referred to it. One of these seemed to be connected to appearance. An extremely attractive woman, this seemed to have presented special challenges to Evelyn. She explained how gender barriers have to do not just with gender itself, but with the various concomitant aspects of gender. She broke it down:

It is not just because I'm a woman. I mean, there is an actual response to an attractive female officer that is very contradictory inside a man's head. And a police sergeant comes to me and says "You need to do something for me captain." I asked what it was. "You need to wear your uniform to the roll call; you can't wear a dress." I asked him why. "Because when the men see those legs and they see you, they're not listening to what you're saying Captain. They're just thinking what they could do with you." I replied: "Well sergeant, don't you think that's the exact reason I *need* to do that? Because they need to understand that no matter what I look like or what they think they want to do with me physically, I'm still the captain?" He insisted: "They're not listening to you; they just want to do something with you." My feelings are that if I accept that, then I've accepted that as the only way to succeed as a female in law enforcement culture. I then have to become "the amorphous being" – the thing that isn't a woman and isn't a man. Which is what I refuse to do!

*Push it to the Back.* Evelyn felt that "a woman in law enforcement has to have a survival mechanism." What survival or coping mechanisms did Evelyn draw upon?

“There is a little compartment back in here – it goes back in here, and I don’t have to deal with it. Because you can’t.”

When talking to her friends, Evelyn has found that she is reminded of events that she has survived by forgetting. “I survive by not thinking about it. It goes someplace else.” In fact, Evelyn doesn’t have memory of a lot of things. Once her friends remind her of it and identify it, she recalls it. “But I could never have thought of it on my own because it got pushed so far back.”

Perhaps Evelyn’s survival mechanism of “pushing it back” is not the healthiest advice to provide to young women leaders, but one must wonder if perhaps Evelyn (as well as possibly other successful women leaders) would never have made it to where she rose without using that technique. She ended the interview with a tinge of the hurt that letting loose of her coping mechanism would bring: “When you talk to somebody else, you have to bring it back up, and then you can’t forget it, you can’t let it go.”

### *Research Issue Three: Suggested Advancement Strategies for Future Women Leaders*

*Mentor Each Other.* Evelyn felt that one of the things lacking in law enforcement was an organization for women to mentor each other. She stated that one of the reasons for this unfilled need is that women fear that if they mentor another woman, the other woman will become competition and may promote beyond herself. But Evelyn pointed out that is what should happen. That is how women as a group will make progress. “When we move on, there are some women behind us that are able to carry on and move higher than us.”

Sadly, Evelyn reflected on the fact that “women are reluctant to allow that natural growth to occur.” She expressed it this way: “In actuality, in their own hearts, they don’t

want that to see [other women surpass the levels that they, themselves, achieved] because that means that they didn't succeed as well as they thought they should have."

For this reason, Evelyn helped to create a national organization for women leaders in law enforcement. She clarified that the benefit of such an organization is that women can mentor other women in different organizations from their own, and thus will not feel threatened by the process. "I think mentoring is very important, but it can't be someone in your own agency because we as women haven't gotten beyond that yet. We haven't figured out how to mentor our own women without feeling threatened by them."

She expressed that she had felt that it would be helpful to hear about other women's struggles, but that women won't generally talk about them. "Women won't talk to other women about their struggles or about how they feel because it's 'out'; then they have to admit that those things happened."

Evelyn suggested that an additional step that could be taken would be the development of an anonymous forum in which women could speak about issues of gender discrimination. She suggested that women might be encouraged to speak in such a forum if they only understood the impact that their silence has on the continued problems of women coming up in the organization. This refusal to acknowledge the existence of discrimination prevents the very changes that are required to address the problem. Sadly, Evelyn noted that it is still common for women to put down other women in their organizations. She said that "fitting in" is one of the most important things in law enforcement culture, and that "women tend to put down each other in front of the men in order to be accepted by the men because that is more important than showing integrity and doing the right thing."

*Stay Committed.* Evelyn strongly believed that a woman in law enforcement needs to be sufficiently committed to be successful and to move the profession forward. Otherwise, “you won’t be able to tolerate what I believe is the incredible pressure to be perfect.”

*Watch Yourself.* Evelyn warned that women must be aware that at times a woman should expect to feel paranoid because of a sense that the males are waiting to catch you make an error. She felt that things are not always fun because of the added pressure put on a woman in the law enforcement field.

*Expect Rumors About Infidelity.* Evelyn provided an additional word of caution to women that in a male-dominated organization, there will be rumors about infidelity with male officers and suggestions that promotions and “moving up the ranks” are due to “who she was sleeping with.” Evelyn felt that she experienced a substantial amount of such rumors and had dealt with it by being comfortable with herself. She expounded:

And if you’re in a male-dominated organization you’re around men all the time, so there’s all these rumors about you and who you’re sleeping with, or could be sleeping with, and how’s your family going to react to that. A prevailing part of my career was “yes, she’s really smart, but, you know, she was also sleeping with so-and-so.” Well, not true, but that type of thing that goes on as a result of moving up in the ranks due to the jealousies that exist.

*Be Prepared for Character Assassinations.* Women have to cope with many jealousies that exist. “So you have to be very comfortable with yourself. Or get very comfortable with yourself because everybody’s going to pick you apart in little pieces. Character assassination is common.”

Evelyn certainly had the experiences to back her words of caution. Every piece of advice that she provided could be tied in to the bits of career history that she shared during the interview.

*Perspectives on the Future of Women Leaders in Law Enforcement*

When asked about what she foresees for the future for women in law enforcement, Evelyn expressed an expectation that things will change with time. Wisely, she recognized not only the role of time in creating change, but also the importance of women being true to themselves, regardless of their cultural background:

Time and women being themselves and ultimately the world realizing that people do things differently, whether they are a male or a female, a black, a white, an Hispanic or Asian. And that shouldn't mean that they can't do it, or that they are less effective.

Case Study Two: Hazel (A Pseudonym: meaning *commander*)

*Organizational Role and Career Background*

For more than three years, Hazel has been director of security at a large private corporation. She reports to the vice president of human resources. She had spent her career in law enforcement both in municipal police departments and at campus police agencies. She left law enforcement after serving as chief of three different law enforcement organizations. Two of these were campus police agencies, the HPD and the IPD. One was at the KPD, a small municipal police department. She reported leaving her law enforcement positions because she had "just reached the end." She had been in law enforcement for 29 years, but left because "it didn't light me up anymore." She felt that



she had done everything in her positions that she had set out to do and “couldn’t make anymore changes.”

After receiving her undergraduate degree, Hazel married for the first time and moved to a different geographic area because of her husband’s new job. She obtained a position as an administrative assistant for a county sheriff’s department. She then decided to attend the academy and within a year she took the civil service exam. Hazel became a police officer and was happy with that decision.

After a few years, she and her husband moved again, and she obtained work for a different police department. Hazel obtained a master’s degree in public administration and received a promotion that began her move into the executive levels of law enforcement.

This agency that Hazel worked for was a public safety department, which meant that it was combined with a fire department. Hazel was a firefighter in addition to being a police officer. This placed Hazel in a position of being able to comment about the discrimination faced by women firefighters as well as women in law enforcement. She found the two occupations to be similar in the gender barriers that women face.

Eventually, Hazel ended up leaving the IPD to accept a chief position at a small municipal police department, the KPD. From there, she made the decision to go into private industry and accepted a position from a friend who is the president of a large corporation.

*Personal Sacrifices Made for Career Advancement.* Because Hazel realized that she needed investigative experience in order to reach the levels that she wanted, she needed to move into divisions with irregular hours. This involved sacrificing time with

her daughter, who at that time was only seven or eight years old. Because she eventually became divorced, Hazel had to obtain childcare assistance because of the possibility of being called out during the night, and she needed to have someone at home to take care of her child.

*Leadership Struggles.* Although eventually very successful in her law enforcement career, Hazel initially experienced struggles in overcoming the barriers to career success. She spoke of her discouragement at her failed attempts to promote and to feelings that she had been treated unfairly:

The first time I was a lieutenant and I just got disgusted. I just frankly competed out of anger. I got passed over two or three times for captain and I was getting more and more disgusted. I knew that I had more education than everybody, and I just got disgusted and wanted to leave.

*Attempts to Become Chief.* Although Hazel did eventually receive three police chief appointments, she encountered some failures in her early attempts at the top level position. She described these efforts in a very positive manner, looking for the bright side, as was her style:

So it ended up that I competed for an outside chief position for a campus police agency, and I came out second. I lost to someone who was Hispanic, and he also had a great background in law enforcement. Well, I also got along really well with the woman who was hiring for this position. But I didn't get the position. And I was really relieved. I ended up getting promoted where I was and thought that I had the ideal job as a patrol commander. I also had responsibilities for all the watch commanders which had been my favorite position there, so they

answered to me. But then I got a call from the campus asking me to take the position that I had just lost out on. I attempted to refuse it, saying that I'm happy with the one I now have. The woman in charge of hiring for the position pressed me to take the job and explained what had happened. Apparently this guy went to a conference and took his secretary with him and ended up sleeping with her, and she freaked out. It was the biggest mess. Anyway, I had lunch with the woman who convinced me that I could make such a difference there.

And I thought that if I was going to leave my agency that was the right time, even though I didn't really want to. I was happy there, but I recognized that I was not going to be chief at that agency. There was just no way. So it was the time.

Hazel took her first chief position at the HPD, but found it unsatisfactory job. She explained: "It was really tough. It was really a difficult three years in the new spot."

About two and a half years into the job as chief of the HPD, Hazel was approached by someone at the IPD, another campus police agency, because the chief there was retiring. As Hazel explained, "it wasn't much of a competition because they knew they wanted me." Hazel explained that "in academia, they hired chiefs the same way they do faculty appointments where everything is done by committee." She received the appointment at the IPD because "they knew they wanted me, and they were actually after me."

When she was at the IPD, she was approached and asked to apply for a position at the JPD campus for the chief position, and it wasn't a good fit for several reasons, such as "because the school was too small, and it was too expensive." Although not her ideal job

at that point, Hazel wanted another job because things weren't going well at the IPD due to some political problems she had to handle. However, she did not get the JPD job this time. While she acknowledged that the male who received this position at the JPD was less qualified, in her self-effacing way, she equated it to her "not doing very well in the interview process."

I didn't do well at that interview. I just wasn't mentally prepared for it. I just didn't do well at all. So, you know, that was me. It wasn't them. I just didn't give them good answers to the questions. It was a fairly standard interview process. Particularly by academic standards, they didn't ask anything really difficult. I just wasn't prepared, hadn't thought through the possible questions.

*Research Issue One: Advancement Issues for Women in Law Enforcement*

*Perception of Gender-Related Discrimination.* Although a person who clearly always looked at the bright side, Hazel felt that she had encountered gender discrimination in more than one of her positions. She explained how she felt at one point when she was passed over for someone undesirable:

And I watched people get promoted around me. I think the one that hurt the worst was they promoted a guy who had been convicted of sexual harassment as the captain over me. That just killed me. And then they said and you have to go work for him. What was really upsetting to me was that this guy had been my mentor. He had talked to me all the way to lieutenant, and I liked him so much and had respected him so much at one time. But I remember walking in one day, and he looked at me and he said "you have become my competition." And I thought he was kidding. But he was not. And he proceeded to try to sabotage me. It was

dreadful. To the extent that when I had an opportunity just to get away, I ended up taking a job in internal affairs. That was the event that precipitated that move. What he had done, there was a female employee he got on the elevator with, and it was like two or three o'clock in the morning, and he looked at her and said 'this bus leaves at six a.m. - be on it.' He got suspended for two weeks for that. But then he got promoted a year later, to supervise me.

*The Double Standard.* Hazel felt that women were measured differently in law enforcement. Because of this, Hazel became uncomfortable about the possible reactions to her mistakes, because they would inevitably be made. She stated that:

Any mistake I ever made in the field always got magnified. It is worse when you are a woman because there were so few, and it always got based on gender as opposed to just making a mistake, just being human. So any mistake or misstep that I made in the field was always chalked up to it being due to my gender. Whether it was a command decision or whatever. Like in emergency situations, if somebody didn't follow orders or maybe the wrong order got given or something like that. I mean, we all make errors and nobody got hurt as a result of anything I did except for me, but looking back I have to say those missteps are magnified for women.

#### *Research Issue Two: Advancement Strategies and Coping Mechanisms Utilized*

*Learn From Mistakes.* Hazel began to anticipate that blame would be levied against her. She would sometimes take chances, knowing that she was learning by experience, and that she would be criticized if she made a misstep. She explained this: "If

I had more confidence in my ability I would not have been so conscious of this. So it was sometimes trial and error and just, you know, willing to learn, some by mistake.”

*Be An Effective Leader.* Hazel professed her leadership ideals as a combination of political awareness and kindness in dealing with people. She referred to the Bolman and Deal book on *Leading With Soul* (2001) as well as their book on *Reframing Organizations* (1997).

Bohlman and Deal wrote a book many years ago called *Leading with Soul*. It is just an extraordinary allegory. And that’s really what it is. I mean, that’s kind of the bottom line here. In the book on *Reframing Organizations*, they talked about the manager as an artist which appealed to me. And how we view the organization primarily through one frame. I mean, we use several but we will pick our favorite frame and it can be structural, like the military, or a police department. It can be political, which is the frame I’ve used frequently.

*Know When to Leave.* Hazel considered that political shifts in an organization are important to note, and that leaders should pay attention to them in determining their tenure in an agency. She explained her reasoning for leaving one of her chief’s positions:

I think women are sometimes more perceptive of the shift and political change than men. I always felt like I knew the right time to get out. And when you’re on top, it was important that I had always been followed by someone because I really believe strongly in developing internal people and leading people to take my place. So I was just tired. I really wanted to do something else, and something really different. I see men and women trying to hold on to jobs that they need to leave. You know, they just need to find something else.

*Listen to the Truth.* Hazel spoke to the temptation of getting comfortable in a position and failing to hear the truth about how others judge your performance or even to recognize when the time to leave has come. As she said:

It is very easy to get insulated in that in a top job, whether you are a CEO of a corporation, or whether you are a police chief. That is the danger. And if you don't create an environment where people can really tell you the truth as they see it, you are going to be surrounded by "yes people" and you are not going to be able to hear some stuff that you need to hear. And it's really hard to listen to at times, particularly when you want to come to your own defense and say but you don't understand, this is the reason I did it like this. You just have to create the environment to be able to listen. And it is really hard to do.

*Research Issue Three: Suggested Advancement Strategies for Future Women Leaders*

*Mentor Each Other.* Although many of the mentors that Hazel had were men, she learned the importance of women mentors later in her career. She admitted:

I certainly didn't have the maturity early on that I have now. I wouldn't ask advice either because who do you go to? You know, I did have a few mentors. They were all men. And later on, I wanted to develop friendships with women in other areas.

*Don't Worry About the Press.* Hazel learned a very valuable lesson from a friend of hers, which was that "bad press" doesn't last very long and a leader should not worry about the media as long as they, themselves, believe that they are doing the right thing. She urged women to not try to battle the press, but just wait it out:

When you read about yourself in the paper, and you're not having a good day,

since the paper doesn't like you, just remember that the public is very fickle. They won't remember that news story the next day. It is not as big a deal in their minds as it is in yours, and it passes. What you don't want to do... well, first of all, not fight every battle, and I think there was a period of time I tried to.

*Be a Team Player and Avoid Mental Resistance.* Hazel spoke of the importance of recognizing that people can learn from each other and that they can also develop skillful mental habits and attitudes by letting go of resistance. Both of these ideas were spoken of together, and were ideas that she had thought about due to her involvement in yoga. She advised:

Certainly you need to be a team player. I became a yoga instructor several years ago, and one of the lessons I've learned in that has certainly been applicable in both fields, in any field, is that everybody and everything is your teacher. You know, what we resist persists, so really let go of the resistance. Just that whole physical pushback. And say "is there a lesson here, do I need to just back off?"

#### *Perspectives on the Future of Women Leaders in Law Enforcement*

Although generally one to look for the silver lining, Hazel was reluctant to paint a rosy picture of the future for women leaders in law enforcement. She reflected upon the period of time several decades ago, when women such as she first began to create careers for themselves in law enforcement. But she has not seen the kind of growth for women in the field that she would have expected to see. Therefore, she did not seem convinced that women should expect to assume a greater proportion of leadership roles in the future. She opined:



Women who are retiring are not being replaced by other women. So I'm not seeing a lot of other women coming into the field taking leadership positions, and I'm very disappointed in that. When I tried to create an organization for women in law enforcement, one of the things that I had said over and over is that I hope the need for this organization becomes obsolete. I really wished that the whole idea of women leaders in law enforcement would become so mainstream that you don't need an organization to help women. But now, I don't think that's going to be true. I really don't.

Case Study Three: Lola (A pseudonym: meaning *a strong woman*)

*Organizational Role and Career Background*

Currently a lieutenant in the family violence unit of the LPD, a large metropolitan police department, Lola has a master's degree in business administration as well as one in counseling, and is studying for a doctorate degree in psychology. Reporting to her are both a detective unit and a counseling unit.

Lola had at one time been assistant chief of the LPD, directly supervising the Internal Affairs Division, the Special Operations Division, the Narcotics Division, and the Traffic Division. Included within these divisions were the Mounted Unit, the Tactical Teams, and the Fugitive Unit. She was in that position for four years, prior to which she was deputy chief for three years. Two years ago she was demoted to lieutenant because of accusations concerning her management responsibility over a fake-drugs scandal. Fake cocaine was planted on innocent people who were arrested and eventually convicted and

imprisoned. Lola, having responsibility for the narcotics unit as well as internal affairs, was demoted. Her claim was that she was not aware of the scam or the cover-up.

Because she has a lawsuit currently pending against the LPD, she could not provide certain details of the demotion. However, she did stress that her management and job performance were never questioned. She headed very high profile divisions and stated that she never had any issues arise that she did not effectively address. She was very proud of her many accomplishments and cited awards given to her by women's groups and criminal justice organizations.

Lola remains a lieutenant at the LPD awaiting resolution of her lawsuit against them. She has turned down offers to leave the LPD for a better position elsewhere, but will not do so until the matter is cleared. Then she expects to get her former position as assistant chief back or to move to another agency.

*Personal Sacrifices Made for Career Advancement.* Lola made some sacrifices with respect to her family as she moved up in her career. She worked nights "where mainly the females, the minorities, the minority females were always placed." Although she worked nights regularly throughout her career, eventually she was able to get into a day position as she advanced in the organization.

Because she had a young child and valued her family life, giving up time at home with the family at night was a great personal sacrifice to Lola. Additionally, since her husband was also a police officer, they had less valuable time together since they had to work different shifts in order that one could be at home with the child.

*Leadership Struggles.* Lola has not yet competed for a chief's position, but has that as her goal. She had been in a prime position to be considered for such a spot until

her demotion. Still, she hopes to become chief and to fight the reduced rank that she was given.

Lola had been demoted due to an incident that occurred when she in charge of Internal Affairs and was conducting an investigation of the Narcotics Division. Because she is confident that she did nothing wrong, Lola is determined to see her name cleared. Even though many people have told her to disregard it and consider it as a political issue, she considers it personal and wants to face it directly.

*Research Issue One: Advancement Issues for Women in Law Enforcement*

*Perception of Gender-Related Discrimination.* In Lola's opinion, "women in general have to really struggle more than I would say our male counterparts. I think that women are still not accepted." Lola believes that her demotion would not have happened if she were male.

*Racial Discrimination.* Being of Latino descent, Lola felt that she had encountered racial discrimination as well. Her comments spoke more to the "double whammy" of the minority female status than solely to gender. Before her demotion, Lola was the highest ranking Hispanic female in the LPD. She stated that:

Female minorities have a much more difficult time in getting accepted as part of the organization. Minorities just have to struggle more. They have to do more to be able to be recognized. I always felt that you had to do triple whatever the males or white females would do to get recognition or to get noticed.

Lola expressed her feelings that even though some people may speak as though racism doesn't exist anymore, it in fact does, although it may be present in different forms.

Well, it's not physical like it used to be, people treat people differently in different

ways. It could be administratively, it could be by media, it could be by gossip or rumors. Attacks on minorities are done differently today than they were done in the past. They're not as open. But it's still there. Racism is still there. If you have it within a department, you have it out in the community. That mentality is still out there.

Continuing to explain, Lola expressed her hope that the new officers coming into law enforcement are not marred by the racism of the past. True to her positive nature, she conveyed her impressions that the new officers seem better educated and look at things more objectively than people did in the past.

When asked for examples of how she has observed racism in her time as a leader in law enforcement, she described an occurrence related to her hiring decisions that had occurred only a few years ago. She was interviewing to fill a slot in a department that was primarily comprised of Anglo males, and she selected a candidate who happened to be a minority because she considered him the most qualified. Lola described the uproar that occurred, including officers complaining to the Police Officer's Association. "The Association got upset and wanted to know why I selected this person, but prior to my selecting that minority, they had never asked why I had selected an Anglo."

Following that incident, she found that people were questioning other hiring decisions that she made involving females. Lola reported how other officers were talking about her management decisions in a way that implied she would "run the division into the ground." She felt that it was made very clear to her that she should not hire too many women or people of color, or the Anglo males would have their Association file lawsuits declaring that she was hiring people selectively on that basis.

Lola expressed feelings that her demotion was welcomed by many people. “I’m sure there are some people that feel glad that they took out a minority female. I have heard that.”

*The Victim’s Denial of Gender Discrimination.* Lola felt that throughout the careers of all women in law enforcement, there are gender-related struggles. She recounted her observations that women who do not admit to having experienced discrimination are engaging in denial:

I don’t think that any female in this department that has reached the level that we did has ever not had that. I don’t believe they have never had any gender-related issues. If they tell you they never have, I would say that’s not at all true.

*The Double Standard.* As Lola expressed it: “If a woman is outspoken and doesn’t agree, well they’re just not part of the team. If a man is outspoken and doesn’t agree, well he’s just being assertive. They are viewed differently than what a woman would be viewed.” In Lola’s experience, if a woman disagreed with what she was told, then she was considered as being uncooperative rather than as acting as a commander. She found that if she voiced disagreement just the same as any other male would voice their disagreement, it would be taken as not being part of the team, rather than simply having a difference of opinion.

*Women Discriminating Against Women.* Lola spoke of the differences that she has experienced in supervising women and men. She described one incident that occurred when she was Assistant Chief where a female, Maribelle, whom she supervised, was friends with another Assistant Chief of her equal rank who was male. Although she was

assigned to Lola's bureau, Maribelle would go to the Assistant Chief of another bureau to complain about Lola.

Lola informed her male counterpart that he should let her supervise her own staff and that the decisions that she made were not his concern and that it was inappropriate for him to be involved. Lola felt that this situation undermined her authority as a manager and that this situation would not have occurred if Lola were a male. "It was almost like she would be the helpless person and he was helping her." Even though Lola spoke with Maribelle and the other Assistant Chief about the problem, it continued:

It was almost like he kind of fed off of her, and I think she fed off of him. He liked the part that she was coming to him for advice, and there were times when she'd be seen crying in his office and the other Assistant Chiefs would ask me what was going on, and so I would have to go to Mirabelle and ask her what the issue was.

Eventually, Mirabelle had difficulties with the FBI and had to be written up on a performance report. Lola thought that Mirabelle's behavior hurt her career growth because she appeared immature and none of the other Assistant Chiefs wanted her in their divisions.

Lola felt that Mirabelle used her gender to try to get out of tough situations. She felt that Mirabelle wanted a lot of attention, and around upper management she acted "kind of like oh woe is me type thing." Somehow, "she thought that being the damsel in distress and needing the man to rescue her was the way to get things, and it just didn't work."

Although she tried to talk to Mirabelle, Lola eventually determined these efforts

to be useless and felt that Mirabelle's behavior style was detrimental to women in law enforcement: "I think she used the fact that she was a female, and this is where we have a difficult time as females in upper management, because other people look at them and think we're all like that."

*Research Issue Two: Advancement Strategies and Coping Mechanisms Utilized*

*Turn to Family.* Lola kept focused on her family in her attempts to deal with the struggles that she faced. She felt secure that her family would always be there for her. And she maintained recognition of the benefit that she was providing to the community. She took solace in the knowledge that many of the officers appreciated her. And she knew that she had always done her best and had always done a good job.

*Be Positive.* Maybe most significant is Lola's positive attitude. She took the attitude that people should not look at closed doors as such because "the doors may be closed, but we can always open them." Even now, when faced with a reduction in rank, Lola remains positive and certain that her name will be cleared and she will be once again in line for the chief's position:

Even after I was removed and put back to this level, I'm still receiving good evaluations, so I've never stopped doing a good job. Regardless of what assignment I have, I always do the best that I can. And I always have the best attitude that I can. And I think that has really helped me the most.

When talking about her impressions that some people were glad to see a minority female demoted, Lola talked about "choosing to ignore it and just go on." She place her focus on the positive: "I know what accomplishments I've made, what I've done for this

department, what awards I've received, what programs I've instituted. So I choose not to let that bother me."

Always looking at the positive, even her demotion was not viewed by Lola in a totally negative light: "A lot of people see my reduction to the rank of lieutenant as an obstacle. I don't see it as an obstacle. I just see it as another springboard for me to move back up."

*Research Issue Three: Suggested Advancement Strategies for Future Women Leaders*

*Believe in Yourself.* Career advice from Lola is, not surprisingly, positive and demonstrative of her inner strength:

I would say just believe in yourself. Believe in your abilities to do the job. Believe that you're a good leader. Believe in yourself and do not allow anyone to make you have doubts about your abilities to do your job and to move up in any organization. You have to be the one that has that confidence in yourself to be able to do anything. Because if you don't then you are going to struggle and you are not going to accomplish the goals that you have set out for yourself.

*Perspectives on the Future of Women Leaders in Law Enforcement*

Lola provided a candid view of racial inequality when queried about her thoughts on the future of women leaders in law enforcement. "I believe it will be easier for Anglo women first than it will be for the minority women." With reference to the glass ceiling, Lola said:

Breaking the glass ceiling? For the Anglo women its glass, for the minority woman it is concrete, and we're still chipping at it. There are very few of us in the law enforcement community who have made rank. And a lot of them are



discouraged. People tend to look at you closer under a magnifying glass than they would anybody else. If we make mistakes of any type, even if we made mistakes 25 years ago, if an issue comes up now, that mistake you made 25 years ago is going to come up. For an Anglo woman who has had the same issue 25 years ago and is involved in an issue now, it would never come up. That's not remembered. But whatever a minority does, that is remembered.

#### Case Study Four: Naila (A pseudonym: meaning *succeeding*)

##### *Organizational Role and Career Background*

Naila is a captain at NPD, a medium sized urban police department. Although there is a deputy chief in the organizational structure, she and three other captains report directly to the chief. Naila oversees patrol services and police communications. This includes all line officers and uniformed personnel as well as all dispatch personnel. She has been with the department for over 20 years. Prior to that time, she worked for the MPD, a large state law enforcement agency. At NPD, Naila has moved from officer status to sergeant, lieutenant, and now to captain rank. She possesses a graduate degree in public administration.

Naila has not given up on her ultimate goal and still has her sights set on a chief spot. A good opportunity may be coming her way: "In the near future, I will be competing for the chief's position in my home agency." In the event of disappointment in that regard, Naila has a back-up plan. She considers getting a doctorate degree in the hopes of someday teaching.

*Personal Sacrifices Made for Career Advancement.* Adamantly, Naila pointed out

the sacrifices required for success in this career field, but qualified that response noting that in many ways the sacrifices are not gender specific. "Police work is fraught with sacrifice, but that happens whether you're male or female." Naila went on to speak of sacrifices of the time spent going to school or training or working graveyard shifts while one's friends are "partying or backpacking around Europe." Yet she found the rewards to be worthwhile. "At the end of the day, I make good money, I'm self-sufficient, and I have some great friends and professional colleagues."

*Leadership Struggles.* When she was sergeant, Naila encountered leadership problems, but not with her work. The problems were with the way her male colleagues had treated her:

As a sergeant, I did my job. I treated people fairly. I treated them as they deserved to be treated based on the performance. Where I did have the problems were with my colleague sergeants who were some of the people who were responsible for the troubles I had as an officer, so I had difficulties with them. But it was more when you're peers you can say things and it's a little bit different than when you are a subordinate, in the subordinate/supervisor relationship. So I educated them on my perspective on a few things.

*Attempts to Become Chief.* Naila has competed for four police chief jobs, failing to receive the position each time. She spoke of these attempts with much laughter and good humor. She described each attempt in detail.

In the first attempt, she did not expect to get the position since she had been at the executive level for only a little over a year. She felt pride in rating as high as she did among the candidates. She found it a positive experience because it provided her insight

into the process. She explained that applying for chief level positions is far different from a simple job application. "At this level, competence is presumed. You're not showing that you have the capacity to do something; that comes when you walk in the door. They look at your resume, and you're invited into the process."

The most important thing that Naila learned from her first endeavor to become chief is that the process is about personal rapport between the city manager and the chief. As she explained, it is "because you're heading up probably the most dynamic and potentially most costly endeavor for most cities." Therefore, "there has to be a really strong working relationship between the person who's the chief administrator for the city and the police chief." Naila found that the chief administrator is looking for whether or not he or she is comfortable working with the potential chief and whether that administrator feels that the potential police chief has important skill sets to offer.

In the city where she first attempted to become chief, Naila felt that the city manager wanted to give her an opportunity, but that he wasn't ready to take the chance of working with an inexperienced chief, and for that reason went with someone who had been a chief before.

In her second attempt, she found that the city council played a strong role in making the decision and so the process was more political. In fact, one council member stated openly that he would not go with an outside candidate under any conditions. Naila felt that this statement created a dynamic that may have affected the decision. Although she felt that the city's chief administrative officer favored her, she came out second on the list, and the offer went to the internal candidate. Reflecting upon the impact that the

statement had upon the decision, Naila said: "I would have preferred that the city council person had kept his mouth shut."

Yet, Naila considered this another enlightening experience because it provided information about how "deeply entrenched the political process is in a selection." She concluded that both of the first two processes that she went through were political, the second one being more overt, or as she described it, "in my face on the front end."

Naila felt that, while political, neither of the first two competitions involved any type of discrimination. She felt otherwise about her third competition. That one began with an approach from a recruiter who convinced her to compete even though she was not interested in living in the geographic area in which this position was located. The recruiter made it seem as though it would be an easy win for her, and she reluctantly agreed to enter the competition.

When she went to visit the city where the chief position would be, she felt even more certain that it was not right for her. As she explained: "I said, this is touristville, it's quiet, it's sleepy hollow. Where's the closest things that I might want on a personal level?" Concluding for many reasons that she did not "feel it," Naila attempted to back out of the competition when she next spoke to the recruiter. However, he convinced her that she would be effective in the job, and so she again agreed to continue the process. Admittedly, her reluctance impacted the manner in which she approached the interview. As Naila explained:

I was refreshingly honest and perhaps too honest. When you go through these processes, people want to have a sense that they feel their organizations are special and that you acknowledge that it is the best place to be. And I didn't quite

do that. When I was asked how I would make the geographic adjustment, I said something like “at the end of the day, human beings are human beings; you live where you live, and you make do.”

Now laughing and enjoying the memory, Naila acknowledged that it was probably not the smartest thing to have said. And yet she was not as amused by one of the other questions that she was asked when interviewed by members of the Police Officers Association, a question that she considered inappropriate:

But I didn’t appreciate being asked what Mr. . . . (Naila’s husband) would think about my taking the job, because that told me that a sophisticated organization and one that isn’t provincial would know that those aren’t proper questions to ask. That is a completely improper and borderline illegal question to ask. I was very snide in my response when I answered “Mr. (X) has been dead for forty years and the only other member of my household has four legs, doesn’t contribute to the family income, and doesn’t talk.” I don’t think that went over too well.

Naila reflected that although she had misgivings about taking a position in this geographic location in the first place, being asked such offensive questions evoked responses from her that prevented her from being given the offer, even if she had eventually decided to accept the position.

Additionally, Naila learned about the process of interacting with the recruiters who frequently play a large role in the selection of candidates for these jobs. She has learned that the recruiters are measured upon their results in bringing a diverse pool of candidates to the city, not necessarily on looking out for the candidates’ best interests. As she described the situation:

This was about this recruiter being able to say “I can bring you a competent person who’s a woman of color, and that will flesh out your recruitment pool, and then you guys can feel wonderful about the people that you’ve had come to the table, and it puts my credibility up a notch on the recruiter pool thing.”

And all the while that she was experiencing these events, Naila did not seem affected by them: “There was nothing that ever crushed my dignity as a woman or as a black person, it’s really just about whether or not they think you fit.”

After recognizing that she had been a pawn in the last competition, Naila determined to not compete in the future for any positions that she was not convinced were right for her. But she was determined to continue searching for an appropriate opportunity for a chief position because that was her future goal.

Naila had particularly coveted the chief position in the city where her second competition had been. As it turned out, the internal candidate who took the position was leaving after only a year and a half. Naila competed again in that city when the competition was announced. As she anticipated, the city council member did not force the selection of an internal candidate the next time since the earlier internal candidate had not worked out as well as was hoped. This competition made her fourth attempt to become chief. But again, she was not selected “despite a second place showing.” That city selected an external candidate the second time as Naila expected, yet one with more experience.

*Research Issue One: Advancement Issues for Women in Law Enforcement*

*Perception of Gender-Related Discrimination.* Clearly a very brave individual, Naila boasted of never having been afraid of the danger of the job or the confrontations

involved. "Where I had the difficulty was that some of the folks here didn't think I ought to be here because I was a woman. They didn't think I should be here because I'm a black woman."

*Racial Discrimination.* An African-American, Naila spoke to gender and racial discrimination in conjunction with each other. Prior to joining the NPD, Naila had worked in a more progressive organization. "The NPD was policing in a 1970's model, which is in part why I felt kind of out of synch because where I had been was diverse, was inclusive, gave people an opportunity." She explained that in the year and a half that she had been with the MPD, she had done short stints in many areas and learned the "gamut of police work."

Upon arriving at the NPD, she began to find that her evaluations from supervisors were "predicated on whether you're going to sleep with them or not." Naila disclosed one incident when a sergeant would ride with his officers to supervise them and "he made some inappropriate overtures and I schooled him on "no." Naila reported that the sergeant asked her "do you fuck white guys?" In her direct fashion, Naila had replied, "not old, fat white ones – no." Naila regretted having said that:

If I could take back one thing that I've said in 25 years, that would be it because I'm very clear about the fact that was the beginning of the spiral of everything I did around here being considered wrong. They didn't like my hair. They didn't like my fingernail polish. They didn't like the way I talked. They didn't like the way I said things on the radio. They were always criticizing my hairstyle and asked why I didn't wear it like one of the other women. And I replied "I'm black

and my hair doesn't do that, and besides that is an ugly- ass haircut on her. You don't think I'm going to wear that."

Things went from bad to worse. Eventually, it got so bad that Naila left the NPD. She remembers clearly that none of the supervisors stepped forward and did anything to help her.

Then she attempted to return to the MPD. It was taking quite a long time to get her application processed, and she discovered that the NPD wasn't releasing her employment information. So, in her direct style, Naila telephoned the NPD and inquired into their reasoning:

So I made a phone call and I said "hey, I haven't said a word about what you people do and how you run that organization there. I haven't said anything. And you're going to keep me from getting a job. Keep me from getting a job and you will be paying me for the rest of my life because I'm at the point right now where I'm just going to sue you. And all the dirty little secrets about the sergeants coming to work drunk and sergeants screwing certain officers and those officers getting satisfactory evaluations when they are clearly incompetent, all that kind of stuff is going to come out. Because I'm fed up. So, what are you going to do?"

The result was that the female personnel director to whom Naila spoke offered to fire the sergeant who had been inappropriate with her if Naila would return to the NPD. Naila responded that she would do so and told her:

Suing has never been an issue for me. I'm not trying to get something for nothing. I just want a job, and I want to be left the hell alone so I can do it. And I chose this city because I went to the Police Academy with someone from here who



seemed to manifest all of the kind of behaviors that I thought were appropriate for a police officer, and he happened to be white and male. My view was “if that’s the kind of guy this organization hires, that’s where I want to work. That was what I thought, but now I’ve gotten here and I see that you guys are a bunch of shit.”

But there was not such an easy solution to the problem. The sergeant was fired, and Naila returned to the NPD. “But that didn’t make the problems go away. His friends kept the problems going.” Things seemed to smooth out after some initial threats and problems.

But still Naila noted that others with less experience than she had were getting promotions, while she was left on patrol. She was left on patrol for about 10 years, which she explained was a long time at the NPD for a woman. Yet, she wasn’t bitter about it, and she used the time to go to school and enjoy her lifestyle. Then when Naila was representing the NPD as a recruiter, she was given an opportunity to work the sheriff’s academy which propelled her career. Immediately afterwards, she scored high on the sergeant’s exam and thus became the first woman at the NPD to be promoted to sergeant.

*Women Discriminating Against Women.* After receiving her promotion to sergeant at the NPD, Naila was surprised when a female secretary who was married to a police officer approached her and asked her “how is someone like you going to supervise someone like my husband?”

And then, Ophelia, the new girlfriend of the sergeant that Naila had earlier caused to be fired, herself caused trouble for Naila. For about a year after her return to the NPD, Naila was faced with related problems. She received written threats and warnings:

Someone threatened me that I should burn in hell for what I had done, costing

someone his career. They figured out who wrote that, but then that person, Ophelia, set me up on some other things to try to make trouble. And it turned out that sergeant who had gotten divorced was now dating this woman. Finally, it was the last straw. I just went into one of the sergeant's office and told him "you need to keep her away from me because if you don't, it's going to be a very sad thing for her, and that's not a threat, it's a promise."

Naila did not know what then occurred, "but stuff just stopped like that."

Naila never wanted trouble: "I just wanted to come back and go to work. Put bad guys in jail, do my job and be left the hell alone." But, as Naila explained: "if you poke at a snake that's asleep it will bite you. Well, Ophelia kept poking and finally I said "you need to deal with it."

Ophelia was then suspended, and Naila went on to become supervisor of Ophelia's son. Naila reported that she was very "gracious" to Ophelia's son, and one day Ophelia came and praised Naila for her professionalism. Naila correctly informed her: "You are your own worst enemy." After that point, Naila and Ophelia developed a very amicable and professional relationship. Naila observed: "people get trapped up in circles in their lives and they don't always realize what it is."

#### *Research Issue Two: Advancement Strategies and Coping Mechanisms Utilized*

*Be Competent.* Naila felt that she has always taken her work very seriously and shown her competence. She has always scored high on testing, so that it could never be claimed that she was given something that she didn't deserve.

*Forgive and Forget.* In speaking of Ophelia and the attempts to hurt her, Naila philosophized: "life's too short to be miserable about the wrongs that people do. You

don't forget them, you just move on. You forgive them and you forget. And you say "I am who I am in spite of that."

*Focus on Your Successes.* Although Naila very much wants to become chief, she is extremely proud of the successes she has made to date. She articulated the definition of success as she claimed:

Fewer than five percent of the women in my profession attain the rank that I hold now. Fewer than one percent of the women in law enforcement hold the rank of police chief. Given these percentages, I am already successful. So the question is really about how I define success and to what level of success do I aspire.

For me, the next step is a challenge, but not one that defines me. If I make the transition from captain to chief of police, outstanding; if not, no worries. I am in a solid decision-making position that allows me to have an active hand in shaping the orientation of law enforcement not just in my community, but also in the larger professional arena. I am in a position that I did not dream of when I began my career. That I am doing quite well at it gives me a sense of pride. I see making the move to chief as the a la mode on the pie. While I will never forget the struggles and the cost to get here, I'd rather focus on the sweet taste of success.

*Research Issue Three: Suggested Advancement Strategies for Future Women Leaders*

*Mentor Each Other.* Naila takes her mentoring role seriously, with both men and women. As she puts it: "My view of them is that I am grooming them to sit here down the road." Naila supervised several women and was prepared to move them into her seat, but felt that the women didn't feel comfortable speaking about their goals to move up the

ladder. Naila felt that more direct communication would have been helpful to the women, yet should have been initiated by them in seeking advice from Naila as their supervisor.

*Be Persevering.* Naila considers perseverance very important because obstacles are always going to be in the way of easy success:

Some of the barriers are very easy to step over, and you step over them without a second thought. Others are very difficult, and it's a constant evaluation. You have to decide if what you are doing is worth the personal toll that it can sometimes take. And if the answer is "yes," then you keep going. If the answer is "no," then you need to stay home and do something else.

*Get Your Education.* Naila considered education as "the great equalizer," and something that a law enforcement leader can't do without. "It's not suitable just to sit in a veil of ignorance, because the world is spinning. and as it moves faster and change comes about faster, education is the only way that you can keep up with what's happening."

*Be Prepared to Make the Sacrifice.* Naila was very clear about the sacrifices involved in being successful enough in law enforcement to make it to the chief level:

I don't know how many women are willing to make the level of sacrifice that it takes. It's a lot of work and it can be very demanding. If you have young kids at home or if you're at the ending part of your career, then a lot of people may not want to take it on.

#### *Perspectives on the Future of Women Leaders in Law Enforcement*

Naila had a very positive view on the changes that have occurred in law enforcement as well as where the future is headed:

You talk about the glass ceiling. I don't dispute that it's there. I don't dispute that

people aren't still dealing with sexual harassment and all of those kinds of things.

And I'll go so far as to say that I don't even dispute that it's not happening three floors below us, just not to the level and to the degree that it was happening when I got here.

Naila went on to explain about the conditions that had existed when she arrived at the NPD over twenty years ago. She described the negative reactions that occurred when two minorities were caught talking to each other. And how she had heard stories of how in the 1940's minorities were not even allowed to arrest Caucasians. At one time, minorities were not allowed to ride together; and originally when women were allowed to patrol, they also were not allowed to ride together.

When pressed about these policies, Naila explained that many of them were informal policies, and yet many others were indeed to be found in the manual. At one point, she had questioned some of the policies being applied against her as a female, such as being required to work at the desk because she had been hurt. She had asked to see a manual. She said, "well you guys find all these things to screw me on every time I turn around, so it would be nice to know what the full gamut is so that I can know what to expect from day to day." Laughingly, the sergeant "gave me the manual, and I went out and started reading it, and it was amazing the things that were in there." She drew a contrast between the situation at that point in time where one had to ask for a manual and the situation today where employees are expected to read the manuals thoroughly and are held accountable for their contents.

So, Naila's perspective on the future is impacted by her awareness of the progress made from the not so distant past of which she is so keenly aware. Not an understatement

that she says: "It's a lot more professional now - it's like the difference between night and day."

#### Case Study Five: Prudence (A Pseudonym: meaning *foresight*)

##### *Organizational Role and Career Background*

Prudence is the captain of PPD, a medium sized urban police department, and has a bachelor's degree in criminal justice as well as a master's degree in organizational leadership. She is responsible for the investigation division, including the detective unit, the forensics unit, air support, and the detention facility. She reports directly to a deputy chief who reports to the chief. In her organization, there are two other captains. Prudence is the first female captain in her department and the highest ranking woman in the department. Prudence has been a captain for three years. The day of the interview was her thirtieth anniversary with the department.

Prudence worked in many divisions of the PPD before making captain. She was a school resource officer, a detective in audits and forgery, a patrol officer, and was in the juvenile division on various occasions. She was also in charge of internal affairs and training.

Because Prudence believes that her male counterpart is being groomed for the chief post, she refuses to compete for it at this time since she feels she would be doing it in order that the organization satisfy diversity requirements. Prudence enjoys her position, and has no specific plans other than to continue doing a good job for the PPD.

*Personal Sacrifices Made for Career Advancement.* Prudence felt that she made

certain sacrifices, and she felt that most women in law enforcement must do so in order to be successful. She said:

I think women in police work make a lot of sacrifices. I think it's definitely more difficult for a woman to be a police officer than it is for a male just in terms of roles. You know, I had to juggle the housework and then the cooking and the laundry and the helping with homework and my kids' activities, which is why there's such a gap in my education. Actually my husband made a lot of sacrifices being married to a police officer because my hours were so unusual.

Prudence was of the opinion that many women do not promote further than they do in law enforcement because of the personal difficulties and sacrifices that they must make to advance to the top. Some of the women she had worked with never made it past detective because of the comfort level provided by that position in terms of hours and schedule.

*Leadership Struggles.* One of the trying situations that worked out to benefit Prudence was the difficulties that she had with one of the male officers. She had been working in investigations, which she might have stayed in because it was a good area for women with families due to the regular hours and time off. She determined that she could never work for a certain male who was about to take the sergeant's test because of his vocal attitude against women: "He thought women shouldn't be in the workplace, that they should be home being wives and mothers." Prudence said that the only reason she took the sergeant's test was so that she wouldn't have to report to him. "The only way to avoid working for somebody like that is to outrank them their whole career. I've done that."

*Attempts to Become Chief.* Prudence voiced her feelings that a woman could at some point become chief of her department, but she doubted that the time is now right. And it would not be right for quite some number of years. Prudence is the only woman with the organizational position and tenure to be considered for the chief position, and her reading of organizational politics is that her male counterpart will get the position.

Therefore, it would be years before the position would be available again, and at that time Prudence will probably have retired, and there may not be another woman with the qualifications to be considered. Prudence felt that she might have had "a shot at the deputy chief's position," but she explained that people are generally "groomed" for the chief's position, and she recognized that she was not being "groomed" for it: "In most departments, you are groomed for the chief's position and, quite frankly, somebody else is being groomed for the position; the chief already has somebody selected."

Prudence explained why she felt that it was unrealistic for her to expect to be promoted to chief:

There was a time a couple of years ago, where it was somewhat publicly said that me and this other individual were being considered and that one of us would be the next chief and that we were going to be groomed for the position. And it doesn't take you long to figure out where that train's going.

She further indicated that the male who was being "groomed" for the chief's position was younger than she and had less time on the force. Since she is nearing retirement, she doubted that she would have another opportunity for competing for the job.

When asked for a description of the process for the competition for the deputy chief's position, Prudence explained:



Well, you still have to compete. The city will go outside and seek outside competition for the position, but I've seen how those outside competitions go. Most of the time, even the guys on the outside find out that there's somebody inside, and they won't even put in for it. Even when the head hunters email you about chief positions, they will tell you whether there is an inside candidate. And quite frankly, they will even tell you if there is a possibility that they will consider a female chief.

Furthermore, she objected to the way in which women are solicited as candidates for chief's positions:

The other problem with agencies that actually look for women chiefs is that they look for them for all the wrong reasons. They want to show their diversity, or they want to show that they are leaders in innovation or women's rights, when they really should simply be getting the most qualified person for the job. If that most qualified person is a woman, then more the better. But we should not be put up as some sort of figurehead. When I made captain, I remember thinking I would really like to think deep inside that I've made captain for all the right reasons, because I've worked hard here my whole career, and I've done a lot of different things, and not so that they can say that they have promoted a female captain. And that is always in the back of your mind every step of the way.

In speaking of her desire to become chief, Prudence made it clear that she would only want that position because of being the best qualified candidate, not because she was a woman:

And quite frankly, I have always felt that if the day came and I decided to throw

my hat in the ring, it would be because on that particular date and time, it was something that I really wanted for me or that I thought the organization could really benefit from whatever I had to bring to the table. But it was certainly not going to be so that somebody could say we had a woman toss her hat in the ring. Two sides can play at that game, and I won't be anybody's poster child.

Prudence was of the opinion that since the other insider was clearly being groomed for the chief's position, she did not want to compete for the position just so that the organization could show that it had considered a woman for the spot. When pressed, she confided that the opportunity for a woman to become chief was linked to the gender of the city manager. While the current city manager was a woman, she was retiring and being replaced by a male. As Prudence explained:

The person being groomed for her position is another man. And it's a man that plays golf with our chief and somebody joked to me one day that maybe I ought to take up golf. I said "no, I think I'll just focus on being a good manager."

When asked how she evidenced the other candidate being groomed for the chief's position, Prudence described it:

He was sent to more and different schools and was sent to all the different kinds of events and engagements and has already been told that he will be the deputy chief when our deputy chief retires soon. It's not even a competition, it's like that is next assignment. So it doesn't take a rocket scientist.

Prudence has accepted the inevitable with a positive attitude: "It is just that I can either make that the focus and be miserable, or I can enjoy what I'm doing."

*Research Issue One: Advancement Issues for Women in Law Enforcement*

*Perception of Gender-Related Discrimination.* Prudence perceived there to be several areas in which women are challenged because of their gender. She described various areas in which she had personally experienced such discrimination.

*Rumors About Relationships With Male Superiors.* Prudence mentioned specific instances where women in leadership positions in law enforcement were rumored to have had inappropriate relationships with males. She noted that not infrequently suggestions were made that the women received their promotions due to the affairs.

*Work Assignments in the Juvenile Division.* Prudence also spoke of the fact that women tend to be assigned work in the juvenile division more than are their male counterparts. She happened to have liked the work, but she recognized that she was given that assignment more frequently due to her gender.

*Different Perspectives on Physical Size.* Additionally, Prudence mentioned some of the more physical aspects of gender discrimination. She mentioned the discrepancy relating to the issue of weight on women as opposed to men: "People look at me and say 'you're overweight, you wouldn't look good in a uniform being a police chief,' but yet some male that weighs maybe 300 pounds, he can be a police chief, and he's just considered portly."

*Lack of Support from Males.* The primary aspect of gender discrimination that Prudence discussed was the lack of support from the males below her. She mentioned this with regards to the support that a chief needs:

If you think about how you came to be chief, if you've become chief, there is somebody else that you beat out for it. And organizationally, that person you beat

out is probably still in your organization, usually one step below and wishing you would leave and they would have another opportunity. And then someone a level below you wants your job. Now, they can either want it so badly that they are going to let you fail, or maybe they don't want it at all, but maybe part of that lack of concern is that they don't care at all and then they are not watching out for you either. So you are stepping on land mines where the people below you should be watching those land mines for you and making sure you don't step on them.

That's mainly a captain's job here, to protect the chief. If there is something the chief needs to know about, you need to let him know so that it doesn't catch him unawares. You need to keep him informed and up on things. And that is every one of our jobs. Whether I'm chief or anybody else is chief, the next layer below you takes care of you. And I think that probably happens more when it's a man in that chief's position than it does when there's a woman in it.

Prudence clarified the fact that situations will arise when some unusual circumstance arises, and a chief will sometimes need to be able to turn for advice to their peers, chiefs of other organizations. Chiefs need the support of the other chiefs because of the political power it brings. She felt it would be easier for a male chief to garner such support than for a female to do so: "When you take a look at these police chief organizations, that will scare you a lot." When asked to explain, she indicated that they are overwhelmingly composed of male members, as she described it "definitely a good old boy group, with all the rights of passage in their histories that get them into that fraternal organization."

*The Old Boys Club in Law Enforcement Agencies.* Prudence is of the opinion that there is definitely an “Old Boys Club” in law enforcement. She felt that this male network has significance for whether or not a woman will be able to succeed in a leadership position in law enforcement.

I’ve had the opportunity to interact with chiefs’ organizations, and I would describe that level as being a “good old boys” network. I have found that if men don’t support you getting to a position, they’re not going to help you stay there. In order for a chief to be successful, you need to have organizational support. I think I have organizational support, but I don’t know as I have peer support. I have seen other women who have ventured into that realm really struggle at it because of the lack of peer support at that level.

Prudence relayed that she had noted instances where women who became chiefs encountered problems because of the lack of support from males. As she explained: “If they’re not going to support you getting there, and they’re not going to help you stay, I think there are land mines laid at your feet where you are just not going to be successful.”

Acknowledging that women could join the police chief organizations if qualified, Prudence told about some local ones that she had attended since captains are considered associate members. She described how she and the other women there would gravitate towards each other since there were so few of them. And they discussed with each other that there were very few women attending such meetings.

Prudence generally avoided such meetings and organizations, noting that it is just not so easy for women to assimilate into that fraternal culture. As she stated: “I just haven’t played that game. I’ve never had affairs that were corrupt, never been out

drinking with the guys, I'm not out playing golf. When I'm not at work, I'm with my family and that's just not a cookie cutter for that fraternal organization."

*Women Discriminating Against Women.* Prudence talked about the lack of camaraderie among women in law enforcement. She noted the competition among women in the lower levels of law enforcement. She felt that did not exist so much when women originally entered the field, possibly because they had endured so much to venture into the law enforcement arena and were working together to change the opinions of men. As she described it:

When I first came on because we were in the eye of the storm, there was camaraderie. We understood that the men had these opinions, that they were the opinions they were raised with, and it was up to us to change those opinions.

Whereas, now, we sue or we complain or do things that only isolate us.

#### *Research Issue Two: Advancement Strategies and Coping Mechanisms Utilized*

*Grow in Your Organization.* Prudence advised that chiefs will more likely be successful if they grow up in an organization, by that she meant being in it for many years. Her reasoning for this view is that a leader needs to know the people in the organization and know what is more effective in the organizational environment.

When anybody enters into a brand new organization that they have never dealt with before, it is very tough because you don't know what the problems are, you don't know the people, and you don't know who you can trust. If I was going to blame one thing that has more to do with how successful you are going to be in an organization than anything else, it is the trust that you have in the people you work with and that they have in you.

*Gain the Support of Your Staff.* Prudence had been an elected president of her police association, an honor that she valued because it represented having the support of the rank and file. She also considered it especially significant since “it was almost unheard of for a woman to be elected president of a police association.” Prudence attributes her election to this position to the fact that she has always been fair with the staff and always cared about them personally. I really care what’s going on in their lives. And that’s a woman thing.”

*Be Direct.* Prudence described another incident where she had responded to back up a male sergeant, and he said that he didn’t want a woman backing him up. She dealt with this in her direct style:

I didn’t handle it with supervisors or handle it with anybody. I just simply walked up to him after the shift and said “I’ll meet you in any alley in town and kick your ass.” That squared away our relationship. He had a new respect for me.

### *Research Issue Three: Suggested Advancement Strategies for Future Women Leaders*

*Take Advantage of Education.* Prudence stated that “education is absolutely a must.” She advised that women take advantage of every opportunity for education that they are given. Although it had been difficult for her to complete her graduate degree because of her personal and family commitments, she felt it had been worthwhile.

*Make Your Mark.* Prudence felt it important for women to find something that they excel in and “leave your mark in the position.” She stressed that it does not have to be something huge, even just “small things along the way” to “leave an imprint.” She suggested that this is more important than any “glamour or fanfare.” She felt that becoming known by one’s actions and getting people to trust you and know you can get

the job done is important. But simply “leave your fingerprint on the organization.” As she phrased it: “Be remembered for your positive contributions and not for being a place sitter.”

Prudence advised that making one’s mark can also be assisted by learning to be a good public speaker and learning to be a good writer. But she felt that the important thing for women is to do their jobs well, and that will speak for itself: “You don’t have to wave a banner or lead a trumpet section. Just get in, do your job, and do it well.”

*Be a Go To Person.* She also suggested that a woman needs to be a “go to person.” Yet, she warned that one needs to set limits so that not too much work “comes in your direction, and you need to be able to stand up for yourself and know which projects you want to take on and which ones you simply can’t; because if you don’t set limits, you’ll bury yourself.”

*Support and Mentor Each Other.* Prudence and some of the other women in the department provided an informal support group for each other. She felt that this group kept them from falling into some of the common traps in law enforcement such as drinking and infidelity.

Although hoping to mentor women, Prudence felt that she actually mentored more men than women. She found it surprising, but experienced more men stepping up to take advantage of her abilities to mentor them. But she felt that the important thing is that “the competency of the people you mentor are your legacy.”

#### *Perspectives on the Future of Women Leaders in Law Enforcement*

Prudence offered her opinion on the harm that women do to each other in law enforcement by saying, “Probably what leads to the worst reputations for women are



other women.” Her point was that “the reputation of one woman quickly becomes the reputation for every woman; and that is wrong, but it is true.” She explained this by telling a story of a female officer who was pinned down by an 80-year-old woman who was throwing cups and saucers at her in a coffee shop. Prudence and a male officer had been called to the scene to back her up and just simply walked up to the elderly woman and “made her stop.” The problem, as Prudence saw it, is that the ineffective female officer earned a bad reputation that would “become all women’s reputation” because of the gender stereotyping that exists.

Prudence feels the failures that women sometimes encounter in law enforcement are unnecessary. She stated:

I’ve seen it happen when women are in over their head, and they don’t know where to ask for help. But when you try to provide them with the help they need, they don’t take advantage of it for whatever reason. And so, it is like that old adage of the guy that climbs three steps up and falls four steps back. That is where women have been in law enforcement all these years.

Prudence expressed qualified optimism about the advancements that women are making in law enforcement leadership roles. She pointed out the nature of leadership positions in law enforcement are changing: “It used to be such a physically demanding job, and now it’s more your intellect, how well you speak to each other and your negotiation skills. Women have those skills and can use them effectively.”

Prudence was concerned about some of the failings that women make that tend to reflect upon women as a group. She feels it sets women back when a woman gets promoted in the ranks “just because they’re a woman as opposed to the women that are

promoted into the ranks because they're very clearly the most capable person for the job." Prudence thinks that many organizations that seek out a woman are doing so because "they are making a politically correct statement." The problem with this as Prudence sees it:

This sets up a woman for failure, and her failure reverberates among other women seeking leadership positions. Police Chiefs are still a "good old boys" network as is law enforcement. Women have to work hard for what they achieve every day. Any slip up at all is vastly damaging, whereas the same slip up might have virtually no affect at all on a male leader.

Prudence strongly made the point that women should work all the assignments necessary to learn the job before they are promoted to top levels because it would reflect negatively on women in policing and the reputations of women in general if more women are promoted just for purposes of equality opportunity if the women have not first prepared themselves to effectively lead.

The biggest mistake is in promoting women because of their sex and not because of their capabilities. I have seen women with very little experience put into position they weren't ready for because someone wanted to show how politically correct they were by promoting a female. Put women on the same footing as men. Give them equal opportunities. If a woman is successful, then promote her because she is capable. The biggest mistake women make, is seeking comfort in their job and not allowing themselves to expand their horizons. I have seen capable women shun career advancement because it has a negative effect on their

family life. That is fine but when you're ready to play, don't expect to be on the same playing field as someone who took advantage of every opportunity.

Prudence believed that it will be easier for women to advance into leadership positions in law enforcement in the future because "it is becoming more accepted that women can do the job." But she cautioned against promoting women who have prepared themselves inadequately for the challenge.

#### Case Study Six: Quinn (A Pseudonym: meaning *wise queen*)

##### *Organizational Role and Career Background*

Quinn has been chief of the QPD, a medium sized police department, for three years. She has been with her organization for more than thirty years and is in charge of a command staff of six people. She began as a police officer and moved up through the ranks to her current position of chief, her entire career spent in the same agency. She has a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's degree in public administration.

Quinn remains in her current position as chief of the QPD. She has only been chief for three years as of this writing, and she has no current plans for any career changes.

*Personal Sacrifices Made for Career Advancement.* Quinn felt that she has made a significant amount of personal sacrifices to attain her present leadership position. She attributes some of this to her value system and work ethic. Defining herself as a "Type A" personality, she explained that she has thrown herself into her work to the extent that she had little time left over for a family or children.

*Leadership Struggles.* Quinn related that she had advanced easily in her early

days in the QPD due to working for a male chief who believed in the advancement of women. She felt, however, that there were hurdles that she faced as a woman that male officers did not encounter. There was a particularly significant predicament that she faced with a woman city manager that Quinn defined as "sabotage" to her advancement. That event occurred in Quinn's third attempt to become chief.

*Attempts to Become Chief.* Three attempts to become chief were unsuccessful, while the fourth attempt placed Quinn in her current leadership position as chief. Two of the first attempts were with different outside agencies. In both of these situations, she had been approached by recruiters who asked her to apply. She described each of these efforts.

In the first situation, she lost out to a female friend of hers whom Quinn acknowledged had more experience. Quinn had no bitter feelings about that loss and felt pleased for her friend's success. In the second attempt, Quinn was ranked in second place, but was informed by the city manager that there was a lack of "fit" that resulted in her not receiving the appointment. While acknowledging that "fit" is a subjective determination, Quinn felt that, in this case, it had nothing to do with her gender. She felt differently about her failed attempt to become chief in her own organization. She felt it had to do with discrimination against her as a woman.

When Quinn competed for the chief position at the QPD the first time, she felt that she did not get the position because of discrimination against her by Rhonda, the female city manager. Quinn explained that she had been essentially in charge of the entire department on an informal basis for several years, and so was eminently qualified for the chief position that Rhonda denied her.

At that time, there was a female city manager and in actuality, even though as assistant chief, I was reporting to my boss at the time who was the police chief, he was pretty ineffective. So, for at least the last three or four years that he was here, I basically was running the department, so the city manager would come directly to me for assistance. And then I was not selected, and she actually went outside of the organization and brought in somebody new. Quite honestly, that was a very bad experience for me. And there was some deception in the process.

At the time of that process, Quinn had been assistant chief for ten years, and a male outsider was brought in from a captain's position at another organization and given the chief position that Quinn believed she was ready to assume.

Quinn further explained that Rhonda at that time had been having personal difficulties with her son. Quinn had helped Rhonda out on many occasions by helping her son with his problems. Therefore, Quinn had not only been Rhonda's source for professional assistance, but had provided her personal assistance as well.

Quinn went on to say that other members of the organization were also of the opinion that she was being treated poorly by Rhonda: "People were upset; they were shocked when I didn't get the promotion, even people from the community felt that I'd gotten a raw deal." Quinn had received a number of letters of support from community members during and after the competition process.

Quinn had been told by different sources in the agency's human resources department that she had come out as the top candidate in all but one of four panels (and had been number two in that one). And yet, Quinn understood that when Rhonda

debriefed the panels, she told them that Quinn had ranked the lowest among the candidates, which Quinn knew was untrue.

Additionally, Quinn said that she had “seen signs along the way” that Rhonda did not intend to select her for the position. For example, members of the police union and the police staff voiced their support for Quinn and stated repeatedly that Quinn had “earned” the position. When Rhonda heard this, she replied that “nobody earns the chief’s position, and there is no such thing as earning a position.” Quinn interpreted that to mean that Rhonda was discounting her experience within the organization.

Furthermore, Quinn described a specific situation which she felt had interfered with her selection for the chief’s position. This situation involved a favor that she had done for Rhonda. Quinn explained:

There was an incident about a year prior to the other chief leaving, where we had a flood in town. Rhonda and her husband lived in town. I made a decision at the time that her house was starting to get flooded that she needed to not be concerned about her house and her husband. So I ordered firefighters to sandbag her house. She didn’t ask us to do it; it was something we did, but she knew about it. Then it became a big political situation. There was an investigation because members of the community were outraged that we would try and do something special for her and not for anybody else in the community. I was very honest about it and said that I made the decision to do it. I would do it again. But all along she denied knowledge of it, when in fact I know that she had knowledge of it. So I think there was a concern on her part that I was being so much more honest than she was.

When she queried Rhonda on why she selected the outsider, Rhonda offered the excuse that she wanted some “new blood” in the organization. But from Quinn’s perspective, she and Rhonda had been close friends and she had helped Rhonda both personally and professionally, and then Rhonda had then let Quinn down.

*Research Issue One: Advancement Issues for Women in Law Enforcement*

*Perception of Gender-Related Discrimination.* Quinn was of the opinion that women are not equally represented at the upper ranks in law enforcement, specifically at the chief level. She felt that one of the specific handicaps to her career advancement was the lack of opportunity to work SWAT.

There were certainly many more hurdles that I had to get over as a woman. For example, it was actually after I became chief that we had our first female on our SWAT, so I never was afforded that opportunity. So from a tactical perspective, I didn’t necessarily have as much experience as a male.

*Subordination of the Female Identity.* Quinn was of the opinion that being on the SWAT team would have been valuable, and yet cautioned that women should not forego their own identity. “I think women have to be their own person, and that’s obviously a lot harder for women than it is for men.”

*The Old Boys Club in Law Enforcement Agencies.* Acknowledging the existence of the “Old Boys Club” in law enforcement, Quinn fell short of advising women to attempt to become part of that network. She expressed concern about the impact on both the individual woman and the organization if women attempted to become enmeshed in the “club.” She stated: “Women have to be careful not to lose their own identity to the

point where they become part of the good old boys network. I think that is very detrimental to an organization and to individual females.”

*Women Discriminating Against Women.* Quinn felt that her level of competence, in addition to the strong community support that she had, had made her appear threatening to Rhonda. Quinn felt that Rhonda was threatened by having another strong woman in a position of power in the city government. Quinn offered substantiation for her opinion:

It was to the point where when they posted the position, and very few people applied, they extended the deadline because they were concerned. The people who had originally applied were certainly not as experienced as I was, so they decided to extend the filing deadline in order to try and attract more people. They didn't attract too many more, but the man who was selected decided to apply at that time [during the extension].

Elaborating on her feelings that Rhonda was threatened by working with another strong woman, Quinn mentioned the “queen bee” concept:

I think in her particular case she liked to be basically a “queen bee.” With the exception of one other department head, all other department heads were men, and in my opinion, she liked to be the “queen bee.”

Quinn was adamant that she did not get the chief's position due to the personal relationship that she had with Rhonda. Quinn believed that she would not have ever become chief if Rhonda had not eventually retired.

#### *Research Issue Two: Advancement Strategies and Coping Mechanisms*

*Develop Confidence and Experience.* In looking back, Quinn did not believe that



there were any things that she would have done differently in her career. However, she emphatically noted that as she became more experienced and her confidence level in her abilities increased, she was better able to deal with the struggles that a woman faces in moving up to the executive level in law enforcement.

*Research Issue Three: Suggested Advancement Strategies for Future Women Leaders*

*Seek Out Opportunities.* Quinn believed that women should be proactive in advancing their careers. She advised:

I feel strongly that as women, we have to try and seek out more opportunities. We can't wait and let the opportunities come to us. We have to be much more assertive about going out and looking for those opportunities to learn and grow professionally and to demonstrate our leadership skills.

*Mentor Each Other.* Understandably, considering her experience with Rhonda, Quinn suggested that women mentor each other for mutual success. Quinn also mentioned the ability of women to mentor men. She stated:

Sometimes as a woman, I have seen other women in my career who were so ambitious that they would do anything to get promoted. I strongly believe that as women we should mentor, especially other women, but even men, to achieve all their career goals as much as possible.

*Perspectives on the Future of Women Leaders in Law Enforcement*

Quinn pointed out that women are still in the minority in law enforcement, but that women are beginning to grow in numbers. She felt that as women grow in confidence and begin to mentor each other and to promote to high levels, they will eventually be more equally represented. She stated:

The professional still is a male-dominated profession. There are still a lot of hurdles to go over. Not nearly as many as there were years ago, but there are still a number of hurdles that women have to encounter and deal with.

Case Study Seven: Ramona (A Pseudonym: meaning *wise protector*)

*Organizational Role and Career Background*

The highest ranking sworn member of the RPD, Ramona is the chief of detectives for a very large metropolitan law enforcement agency. She has been with the organization for over 20 years. The next career step for her would be either the number one or number two position in the organization. She possesses an undergraduate degree in criminal justice and is working on a graduate degree in psychology.

Ramona is still Chief of Detectives at the RPD and is very satisfied with her current position. She is well-positioned for an upwards move when one of the top two spots open up.

*Personal Sacrifices Made for Career Advancement.* Ramona felt that she sacrificed time with her family as well as time for personal interests due to the requirements of the job. As she said:

When you're in law enforcement, if you move up in a department such as this, you work maybe 12 hours a day six days a week. So, of course, you are sacrificing that time with your family. You are sacrificing that time with yourself to read a book or just relax or collect your thoughts. So, yes, I think there are sacrifices that have to be made.

Ramona had children, but by the time she reached the top rungs of the

organization and encountered the demands of someone in such position, her children were grown. She explained:

I was very fortunate that by the time I became a commander, my children were out of college. So, the job of police officer afforded me the opportunity to spend time with my children and be a working mom but also be there during the day for them. I worked midnights, even as a lieutenant, so up through when they were young adults, I was always around during the day if they needed me. But once you become a command member, you are working during the day and the evening. Your husband also has to put up with a lot. Your job becomes your new baby.

*Leadership Struggles.* Ramona felt that she may have advanced as far as she did due in some respects to her Latino background. She stated that “As the Hispanic population grew in the city, like any ethnic group they want to see their people represented. So it helps, but you have to move forward once you get there.”

However, she felt that since most of the department was male, she encountered gender discrimination along the way. She stated: “Everything changes and then it affects us women because the men have to change. No one likes changes, and then the women take the backlash for that change.”

*Attempts to Become Chief.* Ramona had not yet attempted to move to a chief’s position, but feels that one of the reasons that she was in a position to move as high as she did in her organization was because of her Latino background. As she explained it:

This is a very political city, and politics plays a big part of things in this city. I am sure that one of the reasons I was afforded the opportunity to be a commander

was that I was one of the few Hispanic females that had reached the rank of lieutenant in the RPD.

*Research Issue One: Advancement Issues for Women in Law Enforcement*

*Perception of Gender-Related Discrimination.* Ramona pointed out that things have changed with time as more women came on the force and as the men who were not accustomed to working with women have retired. As she explained:

I think they are getting used to it as more and more of us come through. I think they are catching on, and we have had a lot of turnover, so a lot of the people who were here when I first made commander have since retired. We have new commanders coming on who have worked with women since they day they began. But we still have some people in this organization that remember when women were not permitted to ride in a squad car and when they gave lessons at the academy on how to exit a vehicle in a skirt.

Ramona also spoke about the difficulty that women had in obtaining the training that was vital to move up in her organization. She explained:

One of the things that is very import in this city is the city's budget. So when special training came up, they allowed 10 men because men could share rooms and they would save money. We had to fight to be able to get special training because they did not want to send one woman since it would be more for a single occupancy, and they weren't getting the "bang for their buck." We really had to fight to be able to get access to the same extra training that permitted us to get advancement. If you are a commander, and you are exposed to a lot of different things, when they are looking for a deputy chief, they are going to go for the

people who had this extra training. And women were being denied that based on financial reasons.

So it took a lot of us to say it isn't fair. We said "you pay the extra to send two women, why does it have to be only one woman?" So we got our voices heard on that. I am sitting here today as a chief [of detectives] and would not have been able to be here without the opportunity to get the extra training.

Ramona described some of the negative reactions that she has had from men in the organizations as she has advanced upwards at the RPD. In one instance, it was amusing: "I had received an email from someone saying 'I heard a funny joke, they said you are the chief.' That commander works for me now." She further explained:

There are going to be some old school people who feel that women really haven't earned their right as police officers because we were not tough enough and don't have enough notches on our belt. Some of them feel that we are not true police officers and that we don't deserve it, that it should be someone who has gotten down and dirty should get it.

*The Old Boys Club in Law Enforcement Agencies.* Ramona acknowledged the existence of the "Old Boys Club" as she described their activities. She stated:

This department is still mostly male, so it's almost like you're an outsider. They have a whole subculture that is very different for a woman coming in. In the police department as I think anywhere, there has always been a male dominated society. They have their own things that they do. For them, it is okay to sit around and have a drink and discuss their past glories. It's just a different mindset.

*The Double Standard.* Ramona talked about the different standards that exist for the women in law enforcement. She spoke in context of the different home lives the women had while putting in so many hours at work:

Another very big thing that they forget is that a lot of us are married, are mothers or grandmothers, and we have responsibilities when we go home. We may have to put in 16 hour days, and when you go home, you still have responsibilities. Well, when they go home, they can sit down and put their feet up. The majority of them are married, and their wives will accept that. So they don't understand that on a weekend off, we are babysitting a grandchild or something like that because they don't have to do that. So as women we have to keep pace with them, but we really have to outdo them because when we are doing these 16 hour days, we still have to go home and do other things that they are very much unaware of.

*Research Issue Two: Advancement Strategies and Coping Mechanisms Utilized*

*Married to Someone in Law Enforcement.* Ramona felt that it had been to her advantage that she was married to someone in law enforcement and was able to confide in him and share some of the difficulties. She described it as a "sounding board" in speaking of exempt women (e.g. those who are of certain rank, earning higher salaries and not receiving overtime pay):

A lot of the exempt women are married to police officers, and I think that has helped a lot because when you go home, you have a sounding board, you have someone you can talk to about the problems and difficulties who really understands it because they are involved in it. My husband is in law enforcement, and when I go home, I can vent to him in confidence and he really understands.

*Mentor Each Other.* Ramona described the types of mentoring activities that the women in her organization did on an informal basis. She felt it was useful and of importance to up-and-coming women leaders. As she said:

All of the female exempt members get together and go to breakfast or dinner, and just see if anyone has had any problems or issues. We try to do it monthly, but it really turns out quarterly. We met last night and we went to dinner. We had a new captain who was recently promoted to commander, so we introduced ourselves and asked if she had any questions, and we filled her in on what she has to do with respect to different issues that may come up. We try to do that just to support ourselves because there really were not a lot of us at the beginning to have had that. So we try to make sure that the new command staff coming up at least has someone to ask those questions that the guys might snicker at. We do it where we can put our hair down and laugh and joke without being under the auspices of the department.

*Research Issue Three: Suggested Advancement Strategies for Future Women Leaders*

*Keep Your Head High.* Ramona warned that people will sometimes say negative things about women officers and “try to throw mud at you,” but by “keeping your head high,” women can overcome it.

*Guard Your Reputation.* Ramona felt that guarding one’s reputation is important even in such a large organization as hers. She advised : “Don’t ever do anything that you are not taught is the right thing to do.”

*Be Persevering.* In Ramona’s opinion, a career in law enforcement is worthwhile, and women must be tenacious about doing their job. She proudly stated: “This is a

wonderful job, and it is something that is worth fighting for. Like anything in life that is important, you have to fight for it. This is no different.”

Ramona showed concern that women may sometimes be discouraged about having the chance to progress in their organizations. She suggested that women not think in terms of being discriminated against, but to look at it in a more positive light. In speaking of women being disheartened, she advised: “I don’t want them to think of it as discrimination. I would like for women to think of it as just an obstacle and to work on improving or changing what it is that is keeping them down.”

#### *Perspectives on the Future of Women Leaders in Law Enforcement*

Ramona stated her opinion that it will eventually be easier for women to advance in law enforcement in the future as society changes. Her perspective was:

I think the mindset of the community is changing. When I came on the job, my family thought I had lost my mind. That doesn’t happen anymore because it is more acceptable for women to go into law enforcement. Women are out there every day on the street doing the job. They are not just youth officers, they are detectives, evidence technicians, and crime lab people. They work in all aspects of the job and because of that, I think it has made it easier to be accepted by the community. Once you are accepted by the community, the politicians have to listen. And when you are coming through the academy and you are running those 10 miles and the person keeping up with you is a female, there is nothing much you can say.

Although foreseeing changes in the future, Ramona felt that the future for women will depend upon how they fare as a group. She explained this:



People are not looking at you as a female or male, they are looking at you as an officer. They are expecting you to do the job. As long as we keep performing well, I think it will be easier for us.

She added humor to her discussions about the advancements that women have made by drawing a contrast with the past: "We no longer have classes on how to exit a vehicle in a skirt!" However, she grew serious and very honest as she gave her concluding thoughts about the future for women in law enforcement:

Unfortunately, we are a long way from women being considered equal in the police departments of this country. Our numbers have grown, and people are looking at us more acceptingly, but we still have a way to go before we are truly considered equal to men.

#### Case Study Eight: Stella (A Pseudonym: meaning *a star*)

##### *Organizational Role and Career Background*

Currently chief of SPD, a medium sized metropolitan law enforcement agency, Stella appeared confident and proud of her achievements. She possesses an undergraduate degree in management and a graduate degree in public administration. Only in her present position for a couple of years, she explained that the organization was new and unique. She had oversight responsibility for three major divisions.

Stella worked her way up the ranks in the EPD, a large law enforcement agency, becoming the first woman deputy chief before retiring from that agency after two years in that position. After spending over 30 years at the EPD, she stayed in retirement for one year and then realized that she did not enjoy retirement and wanted to return to work. She

was approached about applying for the position at SPD and was successfully appointed by the County board members.

Stella is a successful chief at the SPD, a newly created agency. She has only been there a couple of years and appeared content to remain there for the time being. She did speak of a future interest in entrepreneurial pursuits, but refused to reveal anything about her business ideas.

*Personal Sacrifices Made for Career Advancement.* Stella refused to acknowledge that she made personal sacrifices for career advancement. When she acknowledged that other women may have encountered gender-related struggles in their career, she emphatically stated that her struggles were not related to her gender. Yet, the ones that she mentioned were specifically the type of sacrifices that many women in top law enforcement positions have described. Stella said:

But the kind of struggles that I had was I don't think based upon my gender. I had struggles because at that time, I was divorced and a single mother for 17 years, raising three kids. That was a challenge. Try to do your job, get home, get everybody fed, homework, baths. All of that stuff and get yourself ready to go back to work and do it again another day. That was my challenge. My kids were still growing up, they were in their teen years, when I was part of the first female team of homicide investigators. That was my challenge because when you are a homicide investigator, you work all the time and sleep on the floor if you get a chance to take a little nap. How am I going to be a responsible mother to three teenagers when I have to work all the time? But how do I miss this wonderful opportunity of being a homicide detective, and particularly with another woman?

*Leadership Struggles.* Stella appeared to have had struggles based upon not only losing the competition for chief at the EPD, but also actually being asked to leave the EPD and give up her deputy chief position at the request of the male individual who beat her out for the job of chief. However, she did not wish to acknowledge this or really any other career events as struggles. Her defiant attitude was displayed by statements such as the following:

But, it was never important to me to be the most popular or the most well-liked, so when I had to deal with people who were difficult, I just dealt with them. If they didn't like me because I had to deal with them in some sort of strong way, or they felt offended because I was a woman and had to deal with them in some strong way. I never really saw that as my problem, and a lot of women do. A lot of women can't deal with men in a strong way. A lot of women feel that they can only deal with men in a woman's way. Talk them up, and be nice to them and buy them cookies and then they'll work harder for you. That's never been my management style. I never baked cookies for anybody in my life, and I believe in being honest and straight-forward with people. I believe in being polite, and I believe in being kind. If you tell somebody that they are screwing up, you can do it in a very kind way so that you don't totally destroy them but you can also very directly get a message across to them that this is not acceptable or I need for you to this instead. So, I've had people that have been difficult to deal with. And you just deal with them.

I've had people who've tried to undermine me. I have a lot of male associates who have had people who have tried to undermine them. It is

just business with the big kids. I think women do not do themselves any favor by saying “oh my goodness, they are undermining me because I’m a woman.” You just sort of reinforced that you think that they are undermining you. They are undermining you because you are letting them undermine you. And if you don’t want them to undermine you, as the saying goes, “grow a set and deal with them.”

*Attempts to Become Chief.* Stella was a candidate for chief of the EPD at the same time that Evelyn was, and she did not get the appointment. She retired because the incoming chief at the EPD wanted to bring in his own team. She stated that she understood that, and claimed: “I would have wanted to do the same thing.” When queried about whether it was normal for the incoming chief to bring in his or her own team and for the existing deputy chiefs to leave, she replied that it is normal in most police agencies, but that at the EPD it was not normal. She explained the reasons for that in detail, many having to do with the political changes that had occurred in the structure of the organization that brought the EPD more in line with the rest of the country. However, she concluded her explanation of the reasoning behind her being asked to leave by stating:

But I fully understand it, although I was not happy to leave, and it was not done with great finesse or kindness. It was done very abruptly and really without me anticipating it was going to happen. There were no obvious warning signs. I don’t want to get into all the details of that other than to say that it was unexpected and abrupt. But, I fully can understand the need for a chief to build their own team. Stella continued to explain that one of the other deputy chiefs at the EPD was

demoted, a couple of the others remained for various reasons such as community support or difficulty in locating replacements, and some of the others left when she did. When asked if her leaving had to do with any type of gender discrimination, she replied: "I don't believe it had anything to do with gender." She stated that she did not think that she would have had a second opportunity to compete for the chief position there because of the amount of time that she had already worked at that organization.

*Research Issue One: Advancement Issues for Women in Law Enforcement*

*Perception of Gender-Related Discrimination.* Stella made it clear that she did not characterize her career movements as involving significant struggles. She stated:

My experience with EPD was wonderful. That doesn't mean that things were easy or that there were no challenges, or I didn't have to have many kinds of situations with different people. I started as a policewoman, which is the only thing women could start as at that time. And then women were starting to have a greater presence in law enforcement all across the country as the women's movement took hold, just as they began to have more presence in society.

However, she modified her perspective as she expanded her statements to include other women. She said: "There were a lot of women who had struggles in EPD, and I don't in any way minimize their struggles. " But Stella did not admit to any struggles of her own.

Her explanation was that she worked hard and benefited from the women's movement that took place at the time of her major career development. Stella explained that she took every exam that she was eligible for, studying hard and doing well, and eventually getting the promotions. She felt that she worked very hard and was committed

to doing a good job. She considered that having undertaken many tasks and successfully accomplishing them served to provide her many good opportunities.

*The Old Boys Club in Law Enforcement Agencies.* Stella felt that she sometimes received support from the people who worked for her and sometimes did not. She attributed some of the lack of support to the fact of women not being included in the "Old Boys Club." Even though she sometimes engaged in after-hours drinking with the male officers, she cautioned that as a woman you are still an outsider, "you're not a boy." As she described it:

One disadvantage of being a woman in policing is that you are never really part of the "good old boys" club. But it's not that you don't have friends because you have wonderful, deep friendships with a lot of people and particularly people who are your partners, very similarly to the men.

*The Double Standard.* She volunteered that she did not know whether women had to work harder than men in order to succeed. She noted that hard workers get more opportunities than other people do who are not as fully committed to their jobs. Stella was of the opinion that she received the opportunities that she did because of being such a hard worker and because of the opportunities that opened up as result of the women's movement.

The very good jobs that I had the opportunity to work were a combination of two things. I think I worked very hard and I was a good employee, and I tried to do my best and support my boss. At the same time, it was during the 1970's and 1980's where the women's movement was coming into being, and so the people who were managers on the police department looked for women who did work

hard and they could promote. And so I think it was a combination of both things, being at the right time, at the right place, and being able to deliver when I was selected for jobs.

*Research Issue Two: Advancement Strategies and Coping Mechanisms Utilized*

*Be an Effective Leader.* Stella expressed her strong belief in leadership by example. She stated that chiefs or leaders must not ask anyone to do something they would not do themselves. Stella mentioned that just setting an example with simple things, such as working full days rather than taking time off for “golf” or personal time, is important.

She also stated that leaders should be ethical and be willing to make decisions, even if they are difficult ones. She explained that some people are reluctant to make decisions because of the criticisms they will receive:

Recognize up front that when you make a decision, there are going to be some people who think it is the best decision they ever heard of, and there are going to be some people who think it was the most stupid decision they have ever heard, but the vast majority of the people won't care one way or the other as long as it doesn't affect them too much.

Stella expressed her feelings about the importance of being kind to other people at work, particularly the ones at lower levels or in the field. She pointed out that they should be given the benefit of the doubt when questions arise. She showed her compassion by noting that they are generally young people who are learning to do their jobs and need to be trained appropriately and given support as well as the necessary tools to do their job.

Stella made mention of the poor leadership that she has witnessed in others such

as publicly embarrassing or humiliating other people. Also, she specifically dislikes the expression that leaders sometimes use, “just make it happen.” To her that implies making something happen by any means necessary, and that has ethical implications.

Stella expressed her belief that she has learned by watching other people to see what works for others. She also attributed her effective leadership skills to her educational background in management and administration, to reading biographies, and to her personal growth from dealing with people during her career. She summed up the importance of experience by saying “during the course of a very long career, you learn things, you learn from your own mistakes.”

*Mentor Other Women.* Stella brought into the SPD a woman whom she had worked with at the EPD because she felt a need for someone she could rely on. She stated that during the course of her career, she has had the opportunity to work with and mentor many women, some of whom have promoted to ranks such as lieutenant and captain. She also stressed that she has mentored men as well. Stella found this to be important:

I’ve enjoyed doing that, and I hope that I’ve been a good role model to them.

They told me that I have been, and men have, too. I’m not a woman chief, I’m a police chief. I have women, and I have men, whom I’m responsible for.

Stella spoke about some of the men who had told her that she had been important to them:

I had men come to my office and cry and say that you’ll always be my police chief. I had one sweet sergeant who I’d actually known when he was a student worker, and then he became a police officer. But he gave me a big hug on the last day and said he would dedicate the rest of his police career to me. And it touches



you when you touch people in that way. It makes you feel good that you have had some positive influence along the way. That is what I think really is what people want to have, is positive influence. And that makes it all worth while.

*Research Issue Three: Suggested Advancement Strategies for Future Women Leaders*

*Make a Commitment to Your Job.* Stella pointed out that people make different life choices, and some people choose to focus their energies on their families. While acknowledging that may be good for some people, in order to move up and be successful in law enforcement, it is necessary to be fully committed to your job. She said that “if you want to have more influence in an organization, you have to make more of a commitment to the organization and to be involved in your work.” She acknowledged that people can do a satisfactory job and be happy in their work, but stressed that in order to move up in law enforcement, one needs to “become competitive and to work very hard.” She explained that this will involve sacrificing more free time that other people might have to do, because in law enforcement one must “always be thinking about your job.” She stressed the time and energy commitment that is required in reaching the top.

*Get Your Education.* Along the same lines as commitment, Stella made it clear that education is important in becoming a successful law enforcement leader. She said: “You must be willing to go to school when other people are out planting their gardens.”

*Perspectives on the Future of Women Leaders in Law Enforcement*

Stella indicated that women will likely become more prominent in law enforcement leadership in the future. However, she asserted that this will occur through essentially insulating themselves from attacks and being tough, but not through focusing on the bad experiences that can create negativity. Stella was of the opinion that there are

many women who are bitter about the struggles they faced in moving to the top in law enforcement careers. She stated:

There are a lot of women who have very bitter, angry memories or believe that either they weren't able to reach their full potential, or perhaps did become chiefs and then for whatever reason weren't ultimately successful in that role. That is too bad, and I feel for them. But there are a lot of women who have been really successful in the police profession that don't have the same sort of bitter feelings about their opportunities.

In speaking of women who have filed legal suits, Stella made clear that she did not believe that their claims were always valid, and this may have resulted in their not always winning or being looked upon favorably. She said: "I know of several women who have been involved in law suits and did not have good [results]. And I think you are going to find two very different versions of their experience."

Stella felt that some people are very easily discouraged if others do not like them or if they do not always receive "positive affirmations" from others, but she made it clear that it is necessary to be "tough" in order to rise to the top of an organization. She said:

It is not that you don't care what people think about you, but it is not something you think about, and it is not something you think about when you are making important decisions. I think women who have had really bad experiences in police work, probably really did have some bad experiences because men, whether they are police officers or not, sometimes behave like men.

Stella showed her self-assurance as she spoke of her leadership style. She indicated a lack of concern about the opinions of others as she said:

I am sure that today, as always, there are people who don't like things that I do, or don't like me or my management or leadership style. But it doesn't bother me. I don't know if it's self-assurance because I'm not all that self-assured. I don't think I'm the brightest person in the world, or the most accomplished, or any of those things. So it's not even really self-assurance, but it's just that you have your idea of what the right thing is, and you stick to it. And whether people like it or don't or sometimes whether that particular strategy is successful or not, it doesn't make a lot of difference because in your heart, you think you're right about whatever the thing was.

Stella spoke about the women who were impacted by their struggles in reaching the top:

I know people who have been exceptionally devastated by experiences that they have had in a police department to the point where they just couldn't do it. They retired, and some got pensions for various reasons. Because they couldn't do it.

However, she felt that the future for women in law enforcement is much different than it was when she began:

I think if you look at the opportunities for women today in policing, it is very much like it was for black police executives 10 to 20 years ago. They have paid their dues along the line, they have worked the hard jobs, and they have done what they have to do to succeed. And now they are in the positions to be chiefs. I think you are going to see a lot more women chiefs. I think women do generally have different management styles than men. It is more inclusive and not based on some of the traditional ideas. For example, if you were tall and strong, you were seen as the ideal police candidate. But that is old news. Today the minority is

Caucasian male, and you are seeing more and more women and minorities coming into the field of law enforcement.

Case Study Nine: Winifred (A Pseudonym: meaning *friend of peace*)

*Organizational Role and Career Background*

Winifred is division chief of the WPD, a large law enforcement agency in an urban area. She supervises a staff of approximately 900 people. She has been in the WPD for almost 30 years, currently supervising an area of field operations. She began as a secretary in the detective division and was encouraged to become an officer. She did not have that as her career goal, having planned to become a court reporter.

Given encouragement by others, she went through the hiring process to become an officer in the WPD. Even at that point, she never thought of rising high in the organization, and certainly not to the level that she rose. But she began to get promoted, and went through the different divisions. She worked in the areas of custody, patrol, training, internal investigations, detective, and legal. She was promoted to sergeant, lieutenant, captain, commander, and eventually division chief, where she has been for three years. She spent many years working on her education, and eventually completed her undergraduate degree in public administration.

Winifred is strongly committed to the WPD where she has spent her entire law enforcement career. While not focusing on a position at the top, she admits that she is in line for one when it becomes available. She asserted that there would be a lot of competition for a higher level position, adding that she would be the only female in line for such a slot.

*Personal Sacrifices Made for Career Advancement.* Winifred felt that she made many personal sacrifices in order to move up the ladder in her organization. She is married, but has no children. She described her feelings about personal sacrifices in this way:

By virtue of the job and the shifts and the unpredictability of whether you are going to court that day or going to be held over, sacrifices must be made. For example, it took me a long time to complete my education because of that kind of schedule. I didn't have children because I didn't think that I could do both well. I thought I could do one or the other, but not both well. I knew that I couldn't be home with them, and I didn't have a predictable schedule. I think it's very hard to do both. Not impossible, just hard.

*Leadership Struggles.* Winifred asserted that she had not encountered any "overt" struggles in reaching her current position, and had not yet competed for any chief position. She expressed no interest in looking outside of the WPD for such a position, while she would welcome the opportunity at her own agency. She explained that the reason why gender was not a major stumbling block at the WPD was because of a legal requirement that a certain number of the promotions be of women due to a lawsuit in the 1980's where a woman got passed over for a promotion and effectively sued the department.

*Attempts to Become Chief.* The division chief position that Winifred holds is an appointed position. She is in line for appointment to a higher position in the organization, but said that she does not focus on that possibility because she enjoys her current position.

*Research Issue One: Advancement Issues for Women in Law Enforcement*

*Perception of Gender-Related Discrimination.* Winifred denied any first-hand knowledge of gender discrimination in her organization. She confided that she knew of women who had alleged discrimination in promotional opportunities, but that she had not personally observed or experienced it.

She did describe an interesting experience that she had earlier in her career while working patrol where a female civilian became upset with Winifred because she could not repair the woman's car, even though as Winifred put it, "that was not my job to fix her car." However, she clearly remembered that the woman had informed Winifred that women should not be in law enforcement because a man could have repaired her car.

*The Old Boys Club in Law Enforcement Agencies.* In discussing the struggles that women face in law enforcement, Winifred described the "Old Boys Club" type network, but fell short of using that term. She asserted:

The biggest struggle that I think comes at these ranks when the higher you get, there are fewer women, and as a result you are interacting with a group of men who have a certain camaraderie. Even though I think I am liked and accepted, there is a difference. I think it would be the same if there were a majority of women chiefs, and there was one male chief. I am not saying there is any overt discrimination, but just in day-to-day interactions, they have more in common with each other by virtue of being men.

When asked if she were referring to the concept of the "Old Boys Club," Winifred stated "nothing as sinister as that," but went on to describe that "men operate differently than women." She disclosed her thoughts on this through the following statement:

Men will build a coalition of support or operate in a system of paybacks; you supported me last time, now I'll support you this time. They will gain support.

Men tend to support each other to get things done, and there are paybacks and that kind of thing. Like if they want to get somebody promoted, they will go out and seek consensus for it. And then there is a payback in terms of I did this for you last time, so now you owe me one.

While essentially having described the principles of the "Old Boys Club,"

Winifred shunned the nomenclature. She alleged that working in the environment that she described sometimes felt like "working in an alien culture." She went on to articulate her feelings about the differences between men and women: "Women, on the other hand, are more straightforward and upfront and do things more independently. One system is not better than another. We were just raised differently."

*The Double Standard.* Winifred conveyed her feelings about women needing to try harder than men in order to effectively compete. She reported:

Women have a tendency to try harder or feel that they need to try harder, and I think there is an expectation that they do try harder. I don't think everybody realizes that, but I think inherently they believe that women should have to work a little bit harder to get there.

Winifred spoke about the necessity for women to avoid taking any short cuts on the way to the top:

I think it is forgiven if a man does not prove himself much more readily than if a woman doesn't. People would say "you know, she didn't work patrol, or she didn't work detectives, or she only worked for two years in some division." And it

doesn't seem to be mentioned if a man did the same thing. It is like it's understood that he can do the job.

Additionally, Winifred suggested that women are criticized for trading on favors, and this is not necessarily the case for men. She said: "It is less acceptable if you are a female and you get a favor because of who you know than if you are a male and get the same favor."

Winifred disclosed her thoughts about a woman's abilities being questioned more than that of men. As she explained it:

I think that one thing you go through that is different for women is that every time you get a new assignment, you are being sized up. People are asking whether you got here because you are a woman or because you deserve it. And I don't think that is an assumption or even a question a lot of times for a man. I think it is more automatic when you are a woman coming into a new assignment.

#### *Research Issue Two: Advancement Strategies and Coping Mechanisms Utilized*

*Be an Effective Leader.* Winifred said that she subscribes to the philosophy of servant leadership for the most part, and she adheres to principles of participatory management. She indicated her belief in pushing decisions down as far as possible, and that a manager should not try to control everything. She explained the importance of developing the people below her in order that they can make decisions:

That is our departmental philosophy as well. We try and push the decisions down to the officer in the street as much as possible so that when they have to make those real critical decisions, they have practice at making decisions. I think that is where some agencies "miss the boat." If they must have a supervisor there every time they make a decision, they are not developing leaders. And so that is what I



try and do. I believe in participatory management and like to listen to ideas that other people have and to let them run with it if it is a good idea. I take risks by letting people do that and not controlling them. But I haven't been burned very often.

Winifred articulated her thoughts on the importance of treating people well. She declared: "Most importantly, I have treated the people who work for me with respect and trust."

*Gain the Respect of the Officers.* Winifred revealed her methods for earning the respect of the people below her. She claimed:

I have done the job and not taken any short cuts or been given any favors. Most of the people who know me would tell you that I have earned my current position. I have been through all the chairs, and I think that was a necessity. I have always wanted to be treated fairly – not better nor worse than anyone else. Unfortunately, for women, it is all about having to prove yourself in different positions that you can do the job.

Winifred put forth her opinion that she received the respect of other officers because of the attention she gave to working all the jobs or positions in the department. As she presented it:

I think I have received respect and support from my staff because I have gone to great extent to not take any short cuts, and I've placed myself in positions that challenge me and give me more experience so that I can speak with some authority in different areas.

*Research Issue Three: Suggested Advancement Strategies for Future Women Leaders*

*Learn the Job Thoroughly.* Winifred advised women to learn how to do the jobs

they are assigned. She enumerated the ways in which to do this: "Learn the job; earn your reputation; don't skip the chairs; get your background." She expounded on this by clarifying that in law enforcement, women sometimes are presented with opportunities for advancement or movement in areas that may appear attractive because of the hours or assignments, but in the long-term could turn out to be a mistake. The problem is because of "the perception that you did not go through that chair, or you did not do your time or gain the requisite experience." She suggested that a better approach is to "look at the long-term part of you career and think about how something will be viewed."

Additionally, she presented the issue of considering how one would be prepared to supervise people performing a certain job if they have not done it long enough. She suggested that in some instances a person may not be ready for a promotion even if offered it, and "it could be better to just turn it down."

*Be Genuine.* Furthermore, Winifred asserted the importance of women being themselves: "Be respected for who you are. Don't try and be somebody you're not. Don't try to be one of the guys. Be yourself, be genuine."

*Continue Learning.* The time that Winifred put in on obtaining her college degree, albeit slowly, was something that she considered valuable. But she spoke of learning in a more informal sense as well, and spoke of it as preparation. She voiced the importance of learning to women in law enforcement and claimed that it is a continuing process: "Constantly educate yourself; don't ever stop learning, and there is always something new to learn. Don't ever think that you know it all, and don't be afraid to ask people for help."

Speaking in general terms, she advised women to "prepare" themselves.

Accordingly, she affirmed the changing nature of leadership: "Leadership is something that evolves all the time, and so you have to be very adaptable and open to change."

*Be a Decision-Maker.* Winifred related the importance of being a strong decision-maker and being self-sufficient. She verbalized this by recommending: "Make the difficult decisions when you have to, and do not rely on anybody else to make them for you."

*Have Outside Interests.* The importance of having a balanced life was underscored by Winifred's comments. She asserted that the best advice she could give to women would be: "Don't make this job your life. Have outside interests. You need to have friends who are not in law enforcement. Don't get consumed by it. You have got to have balance."

#### *Perspectives on the Future of Women Leaders in Law Enforcement*

Being at a higher level than any other woman in her department, Winifred has noticed the absence of women at the meetings she attends. As she described it: "You get used to being the only woman in the room, particularly at this rank. I went to a dinner with some law enforcement and government executives recently, and there were a number of people there, 25 just at our table, and we were well into the dinner when all of a sudden I looked around and realized that I was the only woman there."

Winifred has also observed that there appear to be fewer women recruits coming into her organization, despite the opportunities that her organization attempts to provide for women. She expressed concern with the difficulty that their recruiters have in bringing women into the organization. She felt this difficulty may be due to a misconception that women have about the nature of law enforcement.

Somewhat amused, Winifred described one comment she recently received from a candidate at a job fair. The young woman remarked to Winifred that she did not look like a cop. And when Winifred asked her what a cop looks like, the young woman replied "I thought maybe you would be real muscular, but you don't look like you can go out there and get in fights with people." Winifred replied to her by saying: "We don't get in fights with people every day. We are actually discouraged from doing that. And if you do, you have help out there, and we have different tools to deal with that, but that is not the majority of your job."

Winifred surmised that television may impact the conception that young women have of law enforcement because of the number of fights that are portrayed in the television shows. Winifred said that she imagined that because of the fighting, many young women found it difficult to imagine themselves in the role of a law enforcement officer.

Putting forth her opinion that women "make better cops because they have better communications skills to resolve problems and communicate through our heads as opposed to our fists," Winifred also conveyed her understanding that some men as well also recognize these skills that women have. She commented that some male supervisors "recognize that women will talk themselves out of a situation and handle it instead of resorting to force."

However, Winifred has found that not only are few women coming into the WPD, but also many of those who enter the force end up leaving. Her conjecture for why this would be included several factors: women thinking that they cannot do the job based

upon their perception of what the job is; being assigned to patrol where they have an unpredictable schedule and overtime hours; and a lack of child care options.

Winifred implied that women will remain under-represented in the upper levels of law enforcement because not enough women are coming into the lower ranks to provide an adequate pool to select from to promote to executive level positions. In her view, the near future does not hold promise of significant change in the gender composition of law enforcement leadership, primarily because of the reluctance of more women to enter the field of law enforcement.

Winifred and all of the primary participants provided rich data concerning the struggles that even strong and qualified women face in advancing to the top levels of law enforcement. Their stories are compelling and are evidence of the varied issues surrounding gender inequality in the top ranks of American law enforcement. Some may be heartened by the publicity surrounding the few women who have reached the chief level and pose the question of why there are not more women at the top. Yet, data on the obstacles and discrimination that women face in their attempts to advance in this career field provide another perspective to answer the question of “why not more women chiefs of police?”

## **CHAPTER V: THE FINDINGS, PART II - SUPPLEMENTARY INTERVIEWS**

The case studies that were presented in Chapter IV reinforce the notion that law enforcement is truly still one of the last male-dominated occupations. Law enforcement executives are primarily male; and although some women are finding their way into the chief position, very few are allowed to advance their careers to that level.

The present study has been undertaken as inquiry into the struggles that women encounter in attempting to move into the top leadership roles in law enforcement. Learning about the barriers and the ways women have dealt with them should aid in finding solutions to benefit future generations of women police officers as they climb the ladder to the top rungs of success. This study has focused specifically on the women who are in positions to compete for the chief of police level. Factors that may derail women who are qualified to seek the appointment as chief were explored.

The last chapter presented the case studies of each of nine primary participants. These participants were all women in top city or county law enforcement leadership positions in the United States who were or could have been considered for appointment to the position of chief. The participants were selected based upon their attempts to advance, thus providing them exposure to the appointment process. They work throughout the United States, in southern California, northern California, the Southwest, the Midwest, and the East Coast.

Chapter IV consisted of the original data that were obtained through interviewing the nine primary participants. The case studies of these women focused on the barriers they faced in advancing into top leadership positions in law enforcement.

This chapter presents the results of the supplementary interviews. These interviews are of three types: (a) a case study from an interview with Valerie, a police captain, who was originally thought to meet study requirements, but later was determined not to meet the requirements of a primary participant because of her organizational position. Yet Valerie had important perspectives on the advancement process; (b) “alternative perspective” interviews of individuals in agencies relevant to the career experiences of the primary participants; and (c) an interview with an individual who was not a primary participant, but who is a retired chief who also occupies a position in a women’s law enforcement organization, enabling her to provide additional viewpoints.

These three types of supplementary interviews provide means to allow for expansion of the picture that is being displayed by incorporating viewpoints and information that can be obtained from others who may not meet the selection requirements of the primary participants. Of particular importance are the “alternative perspective” interviews. “Alternative perspective” interviews embellish or “beef up” the portrayal of the essence of the activity that the primary participants communicate, further illuminating the portrayal of the “big picture.” In this research, a specific attempt was made to incorporate the male perspective by interviewing male police chiefs.

There are three principal sections in this chapter, followed by a conclusion section. Part A provides an interview of a woman who is one step below that required to compete for chief, and so could not be included with the primary participants. Valerie provides a contribution in two ways: she offers a perspective on certain important issues facing women of rank, and her interview provides a reliability measure of the pilot study because she is now a ranking officer of the pilot study organization (see Chapter I).

Part B of this chapter presents the “alternative perspective” interviews. These six interviews were conducted in agencies where the primary participants worked or where they competed for chief level positions. Although the research design allowed for the interviews to be of either males or females, these interviews consisted of all males. Thus, it was possible to obtain the male perspective on women advancing to the top.

“Alternative perspective” interviewing sought opinions on the advancement of women in the department and about the perceived role of women as top leaders in law enforcement agencies, and solicited advice for women who hope to advance (see Appendix D for sample questions).

Part C of this chapter contains an interview with a retired police chief who is also a member of an organization for women in executive law enforcement positions. Thus, she is in a position to provide statistical information on women police chiefs, such as the number of such chiefs and the national trends. Additionally, she provided insight through her opinions on the progress that has been made in this regard, the barriers faced by women, and her thoughts on what the future prospects will be for women in chief level positions.

The presentation of these three parts of the supplementary interview section will conclude the research findings, which are presented in this chapter and the preceding chapter. In Chapter VI, the data will be summarized and analyzed. The findings from the primary participants and the information provided through the supplementary interviews will be compared to each other and analyzed with respect to the literature both on women in law enforcement and the general literature on women in leadership positions. The data will be incorporated into the final analysis and conclusions by indicating the reliability of



the primary data and showing its relevance in the context of the existing literature on the topic. The information gleaned through the supplementary interviews is provided in three parts below.

Part A: Supplementary Case Study - Valerie (A Pseudonym: meaning *valor*)

*Organizational Role and Career Background*

Valerie is a captain of the VPD, a large urban police agency, and began on the force as a community service officer when she was 19 years old. Because of existing regulations at the time, she wasn't able to get hired as a sworn officer until she was 21. Her current assignment as captain gives her responsibility over the centralized detective bureau which encompasses the homicide unit, the economic crimes section, and the fugitive task force. Approximately 12 units report to her. She has citywide responsibility for those areas, including robberies and gang activity. She is one of two investigative captains that report to the assistant chief who is responsible for all the detectives.

At the point in time of the interview, there were two other female captains in the department. There was also one female assistant chief. The assistant chief to whom Valerie reports, herself reports to an executive assistant chief of police who then reports to the police chief. The organization has four assistant chiefs and approximately 14 captains.

Valerie is still a captain at the VPD and is planning to apply for the assistant chief position when it next becomes available. Because the woman assistant chief to whom she reports has been rumored to be planning to retire soon, this slot will shortly become open. Valerie had anticipated that the competition would be strong, and she would be the only

woman in position to apply. That would then make Valerie the highest ranking woman in the VPD, an organization that had three women at the assistant chief level, all of whom took early retirement without achieving the top position.

*Personal Sacrifices Made for Career Advancement.* Valerie's formal education has been difficult for her because of her work demands. She has a two year degree, but has not had time to complete her bachelor's degree. She works an estimated 80 hours a week, and is on call virtually constantly. She is particularly busy during homicide sprees or when other serious crimes occur. She recognizes that her unit is a more hectic one, and one that requires more time demands than are placed on captains of, what Valerie termed, less "pro-active" units.

Valerie also feels that the personal demands on her have impacted her ability to have relationships, due to not being able to "be spontaneous on a weekend." For example:

You know, if I wanted to drive up the coast or do whatever, you're pretty much tied to the phone or you have to have someone replace your job. So it takes a lot of preparation if you go on vacation. Somebody's got to come in and fill in for you. You just can't be as spontaneous and you know, at night, hey let's go to happy hour. Well, you can't because you could get called out and obviously you don't want to do that if you're drinking and responding to a scene. So it's been a huge sacrifice. I've given up a lot to be where I am, but it's always been my choice to do that.

Valerie reported at the present time to being in a long-term relationship, but that it had been difficult over the years to establish one. Furthermore, she does not have any children due to the difficulty in establishing permanent relationships.

*Leadership Struggles.* At the time of the interview, Valerie was experiencing an unusual situation, one that no other woman interviewed for this study had reported. Valerie reported to a woman assistant chief, an unusual situation for one woman to be reporting to another woman at these levels. Valerie found reporting to another woman to present its own challenges. "It is difficult and many men in the organization will tell you this, it's difficult to work for a woman in this type of work."

Valerie noted that law enforcement organizations are not quick to change or adapt to new working relationships, such as reporting for the first time to a woman. As she stated:

Change in law enforcement is slow across the nation... cops don't like change.

It's like, leave me alone and let me do my job. And who is this new person

coming in who happens to be a woman on top of it, who does she think she is?

Whenever she would enter into a new assignment, Valerie found the following to be true:

There is a little bit of consternation there and a little bit of "watch and see," and there's a little bit of "we'll see how far we can push her." And then probably about six months into an assignment, they know what you want and things are fine. But it's always bumpy.

Valerie did not think that it was as difficult for men to gain the respect of their followers as it was for women. She said: "I can't attest to the fact that a male in the same position would have these types of problems. I would venture to say, based upon my experience, that it is much easier for men in these assignments to just get a whole lot of needed respect." A petite woman, Valerie ventured that physical size and appearance also contributed to the problem of gender discrimination. She continued to explain:

Cops have huge egos or they wouldn't be able to do what they do. You know they have a lot of influence and power over people. When they look at people they know they have the ability to take their freedom away from them. That's a big thing. And every day that grows bigger and bigger and bigger, and then you're surrounding yourself with people who have bigger egos, and the dynamics that have built over time. And then you have some little five foot two woman coming in and telling them how they're going to do their job, you can see how it can be volatile sometimes.

Valerie found the lack of respect to create substantial problems for her, to the point of stating that: "I hate the fact that most of those who work with me are men. I have very, very few women working for me. The stress level is so high anyway, and then when you compound that with personal issues that are going on, it is difficult."

*Attempts to Advance in the Organization.* Valerie has not been taking advantage of every opportunity to promote. There have been two opportunities since she has been a captain to go through the promotional process, and she has elected not to do it. But she is seriously thinking about taking advantage of the next opportunity to compete for assistant chief, which she expects to occur within the next year. She doesn't anticipate that it will be an easy competition.

Oh, I think it's going to be difficult. I think it's going to be competitive. As you go higher up, there are fewer and fewer positions. When I went for sergeant there may have been, you know, over the life of a two-year list, 100 positions that were available. And then lieutenant, you know, which is smaller, and captain was

smaller. There were only two captains promoted when I was promoted; I was one of them.

Valerie suspected that the fact that there is already a woman at a high level in her organization, a woman assistant chief, could serve to make it more difficult for Valerie to promote to the same level. Valerie suggested that some males on the force are of the opinion there was not a need for more than one woman at the upper ranks. She spoke about the dynamics of this particular chain of command, where the assistant chief is a woman and one of the captains reporting to her is a woman.

She felt there were some officers who looked at having two women at high levels as unnecessary: "So they needed one, they gave you two. And they're two of the highest ranking people in the whole command." Valerie expanded on these thoughts:

They seem to think like "okay, we got our woman, do we need to get another one?" When you look at the composition, you have a couple of white males, you have an African American male, you have a Hispanic male, and you have a woman. It's your variety of genders and ethnicities."

#### *Research Issue One: Advancement Issues for Women in Law Enforcement*

*Perception of Gender-Related Discrimination.* Valerie acknowledged the advancements that women have made in law enforcement, but described the difficulties that are required to make these advancements come true. And she expressed her perception that the women still are not completely accepted.

You know, when you look back over the years, we've certainly come a long way, and as far as we've come, certainly as an organization welcoming women, it was very, very difficult through the years. So I think there's a lot of talk that women

belong here, but I think there is also a lot of other conversations that take place. I mean, you fit a need. When I came on, it was like we were a guest, not allowed to speak unless you were spoken to, and then probably 10 to 15 years later when sexual harassment was spoken about and people were getting sued, then it became less blatant.

Valerie speculated on the reasons for gender discrimination: "I think men feel threatened. I mean that probably as honest as I can be. They feel threatened and they don't like change. But I think men that are coming on now are a lot more tolerant of women."

*Perspectives on Experiences of the Pilot Study Participants.* Since Valerie worked at the same police agency as Amanda and Belinda had been before they retired, Valerie was able to provide "alternative perspective" comments about those two women from the pilot study (see Chapter I). In speaking of Belinda, she said:

It is just amazing to see what she had to put up with and how she was able to excel all the way up to the highest level. Being at the peak of her career and being demoted is a whole different dynamic in itself.

Valerie ruminated further about these role models from her past:

But those are the women that I grew up with and a couple others that aren't with the organization anymore. There were very, very few role models, if any. But if you were a certain rank and had spent a certain amount of time in the department, you knew every single one of those women had been through at least a hundred times more than any of these men that are sitting up in these positions right now. Well, I think you just kind of wait and watch sometimes to see how things evolve

and you know they're both very, very strong women so I was confident that they would stick around. And certainly my boss has been in the same way, you know.

It's just if you look at women of rank in law enforcement, they're not weak women. They just are not. There is something to be said for them going as high up as they have. They're different. Sometimes you feel like you're here and just on a little island. You can be booted off that island at any time, so you got to take care of yourself.

Valerie went on to express her beliefs that many of the women who did not last in her department were "run off." She said: "Absolutely. Absolutely, they were run off." But she attempted to explain the strength of the women who generally make it to the top levels of law enforcement by saying: "If you particularly look at women above the rank of sergeant, if you're looking at your lieutenants, your captains, your chiefs, those are the ones who are in it for the long haul. And those are pretty tough birds."

*The Old Boys Club in Law Enforcement Agencies.* Valerie found that she gradually became aware of the discrimination that she would experience from the men of the force. She remembered:

The only thing is when I came on, I was pretty naïve. Like, "oh, who wouldn't like me?" You know, I'm smart and have good skills. And then you learn. You learn about the whispers behind your back. You're a kid, and you're unaware. And then you get in here and like, they don't talk to you, and you're not allowed to speak and little notes about your gender and "your behind" are on your locker.

When asked to elaborate, Valerie offered:

I was referred to a lot at one division I was at as a “split tail.” And I remember one of my training officers said that the only redeeming quality I had was that I wasn’t left-handed. That was the only redeeming quality. I mean, everything else was against me. I was a woman, I was short. So it was just the love of doing the job that keeps you going. I’m sure any woman you spoke to has told you that. Because it’s not worth it. I mean, no amount of money was worth it over time, but it gives you great character and great insight and it helps you do a better job I think.

In describing the “Old Boys Club,” Valerie provided details of their integration into this network:

Now when they are at a very young age such as 21 or 22, and they get around their peers, then all of a sudden they become more macho, they kind of bond a little bit more. When they get in that environment with each other, then they become different for whatever reason I don’t know.

Valerie didn’t have only one negative experience with the “Old Boys Club.” She had been given another direct message:

I remember leaving the line-up one evening and I was in training at the time and somebody had left me a note and it was a recruiting poster from 1950’s and it said that you had to be a white male, 6 foot, 200 pounds. And then somebody had written on there, handwritten on there, “and you have to have a dick.” And that was my little message. I wasn’t welcome.



When asked how she reacted to this, Valerie replied; "I was shocked and devastated. But I wasn't the type of person that ran away from things. It would get me more fired up." Valerie explained that she didn't want to "just sit there and cry because that would be a sign of weakness." She didn't give up:

And they liked to see me get my butt kicked a couple of times. They enjoyed that. But then after a while they said wow, we're not winning here so then they start accepting you and then all of a sudden you're invited to happy hour or some things like that. So it just takes time.

*The Double Standard.* Valerie felt that the double standard definitely exists in law enforcement. She provided her reasons:

I think what any woman would tell you, particularly a woman who has promoted in ranks in law enforcement is that you have to be twice as good as your male peers. That's just the nature of the system. It was just you had to prove yourself a hundred times more, or ten times more than what your male counterparts had to prove. And then you have to build that confidence with them and then when you get into the promotional arena, of course there's tests and interviews and things like that. And the discretion comes at some point whether or not to promote somebody. So it's, again, going in there and selling yourself over and over again, and showing them that you're the right person at the right time for the right reason, regardless of what your gender is.

While clearly things have improved, Valerie insisted that the double standard still is evident, when she said:

I know what is taking place, and I know every time a promotion is made or a

women is promoted, I know that those conversations take place. I haven't been in a room when they took place, but there's always the rumor mill that tends to permeate in that she got it because of some reason or another. Maybe even because of thoughts that they had to promote a woman. There have always been thoughts that a woman is selected because they have to select a woman. And I don't think we've gotten beyond that.

*Perspectives on the Future of Women Leaders in Law Enforcement*

Valerie clarified that in her organization there are not many women promoting in the ranks. She pointed out that there are only a few female sergeants, lieutenants, and captains in her organization. And since the future of the organization comes from those levels, there aren't many women to be promoted. She observed that "a lot of women just don't want to promote for whatever reason in this organization."

Valerie felt that the reasons for this have to do with the women are being very cautious. She speculated that they may be fearful because of what they had seen happen to Amanda and Belinda as they rose to high ranks in the organization only a few years ago. Or possibly, she felt that "some of them just don't want to invest the time in it." She astutely observed that "every time you promote, it's more of your personal life, more time here at work, and they like their structured lives."

Although Valerie was not a primary participant in this research project since at the time of the research she was not at a point where she could compete for the chief position, she would soon meet these criteria. Although only somewhat shy of the formal criteria to consider her a primary participant, she nevertheless represents continuation of

values that are similar to those of the other primary participants. For those reasons, her viewpoints are considered valuable to the analysis.

#### Part B: Alternative Perspective Interviews – Six Male Police Chiefs

Six current police chiefs were interviewed to obtain alternative perspectives that may exist about women in leadership positions in law enforcement and to enhance the data. The chiefs described their views on women leaders in law enforcement and whether women have had equal advancement opportunities and also offered advice to upcoming women leaders. They were also asked about their views on the future for women in law enforcement. See Appendix D for the questions they were asked. Each chief is assigned a pseudonym corresponding to the first letter of the organizational pseudonym assigned to the participants in Chapter IV. The results of the interviews are presented below.

##### *Chief Eaton, Chief of the EPD*

Chief Eaton is chief of the organization where Evelyn (see Case Study One) aspired to be chief and which she left to become chief of the FPD. It is a large urban law enforcement agency. Chief Eaton received his post as result of the competition in which Evelyn, Frieda, and Stella were all at one time vying for the top spot. Frieda had been one of four finalists for the position that eventually went to Chief Eaton, who came into the EPD as an outside candidate for chief.

*Views on Women as Top Leaders in Law Enforcement Agencies.* Chief Eaton professed his beliefs that women are now becoming accepted as supervisors and managers in law enforcement agencies. He pointed out that half a dozen large urban

police departments have women in the chief position. While admitting that there are still relatively few women at the top, he pointed out that women have only really been working in large numbers in large enforcement since the 1980's, thus he felt it would only now be possible for women to be poised to assume the top leadership role.

Pointing out certain differences between genders in abilities, Chief Eaton made the point that physical size and abilities are not as vital in law enforcement as once assumed. He expressed the feeling that women will have more opportunities at the top ranks since the profession is becoming aware of the importance of some of the skills that women generally possess in such areas as communication and intervention.

*The Equality of the Advancement Opportunities Afforded to Women.* Chief Eaton voiced his opinion that women have had equal opportunities to move to the top levels of law enforcement in the EPD as well as in departments across the country. When asked directly if women have been given equal opportunities to compete for the top positions at the EPD, he insisted that they have had the same opportunities as men. He mentioned the case of Frieda specifically as an example of a woman who had the opportunity to compete for chief in the EPD. Chief Eaton stated that Frieda had competed for chief a few years before at the time that he, himself, was selected for the position. He noted that she had been one of four finalists for his spot, the only woman who made the last cut, according to him.

When pressed about whether Frieda had been given equal opportunities to advance to the top, he observed that she is still at the EPD and that "the opportunity still remains." Chief Eaton seemed to be suggesting that Frieda could still be in a position to compete for chief at a future opportunity.

Discussing the resistance that some men may have had to reporting to women supervisors, Chief Eaton was adamant that there are no longer any problems in this regard. He said that while that may have been a problem when women first entered the field, it is no longer an issue that creates any difficulties. He expressed his beliefs that male officers have come to accept the authority of women managers.

While noting that law enforcement is one of the fields that have been the most resistant to gender equality, Chief Eaton insisted that things have changed dramatically in this regard and that women now have many opportunities available for advancement to top positions. He stressed that women are increasing in numbers in law enforcement and that it is no longer a field that presents barriers to women who wish to rise to the top of their chosen profession.

*Advice to Women Aspiring to Top Level Law Enforcement Positions.* Chief Eaton expressed his opinions that women should not be discouraged, and they should be aware that other women across the country are advancing into top positions in law enforcement. He seemed to believe that women will have increasingly more opportunities to advance to the top if they are qualified.

Chief Eaton did not feel that women need any special advice on how to make it to the top in law enforcement. When asked what advice he would offer to young women who aspire to lead agencies, he said: "I would give them the same advice that I would give to anyone – work hard!"

*The Future for Women in Law Enforcement.* Chief Eaton had a generally positive and upbeat attitude about the leadership opportunities available for women in the law enforcement field. Yet he did eventually concede that while women have made

advancements, they are not yet equally represented, particularly at the top levels. As he described it, the growth of women in law enforcement is still “a work in progress.”

*Chief Ives, Chief of Police, ISD*

Chief Ives of the ISD is currently chief of a campus police department where Hazel (see Case Study Two) was once chief. He provided the following information.

*Views on Women as Top Leaders in Law Enforcement Agencies.* Chief Ives expressed the belief that having women at top levels provides a “very tremendous benefit” for law enforcement. He expressed it this way: “We represent society and having top leadership that represents the society which we support and provide services to, it is just as natural as breathing, I think.”

*The Equality of the Advancement Opportunities Afforded to Women.* When asked about the fairness afforded women leaders at the IPD, Chief Ives responded by noting that there have been women leaders at the IPD: “I know that within this organization, they have had a previous chief that was a female, and the assistant chief in this department has been female. So, over the history of this particular law enforcement organization, they have a history of having female leadership.”

*Advice to Women Aspiring to Top Level Law Enforcement Positions.* Chief Ives declined to mention any specific advice for women, but was of the opinion that “as humans and administrators, we all make some of the same mistakes, as well as all have some of the same successes.”

He advised all members of law enforcement who aspire to move into upper leadership that the most important thing is to be prepared so that “when an opportunity presents itself, that you are prepared to move to that next level.”

*The Future for Women in Law Enforcement.* Chief Ives had a positive outlook for the future of women as leaders in law enforcement. He pointed out that there are “a number of women that are in key leadership positions in law enforcement institutions throughout the nation, and the numbers of women in these positions have grown tremendously.” He acknowledged that the increase is “probably not to the degree that maybe some would like to see, but I think in my law enforcement experience, they have grown tremendously.”

Chief Ives felt that the reason there are not more women at the top law enforcement positions is because of the fewer number of women in law enforcement in general. He said:

I think that in order to get them at the top level, you have to have them in at the entry level. And I think that as a society, women haven't consciously chosen law enforcement as a career opportunity, so that the more that come in, will allow ultimately more to be at top levels in the future. The female population of most departments is very small compared to the male population, and so you're not going to have as many move up.

He speculated on why there are not more women in law enforcement: “I just don't hear of too many young ladies that choose law enforcement as a career. And I don't know what it is, the nature of the work or maybe the physical challenges of getting through the Academy.”

*Chief Jones, Chief of Police, JSD*

Chief Jones of the JSD is chief of the campus police department where Hazel (see Case Study Two) once unsuccessfully competed for chief. He provided the following information.

*Views on Women as Top Leaders in Law Enforcement Agencies.* Chief Jones expressed a belief that having “women in leadership, across America, whether it be private sector or public sector is critical to the success of our law enforcement and private sector businesses.” Comparing law enforcement to business industries, he speculated:

Women are equally involved in leadership roles and more women are seeking higher education and are taking on the responsibility of CEOs of corporations. I think that it is maybe 30 percent of the CEOs in the country now, as I understand it. I may be wrong on that, but a large number are run by women. And I don’t think that the law enforcement community should represent anything different than that.

In fact, he was incorrect in his speculation, in that a much lower percentage of women are at the top positions of Fortune 500 organizations, an issue discussed in Chapter VI.

*The Equality of the Advancement Opportunities Afforded to Women.* Chief Jones felt that in the JSD women have had equal advancement opportunities. In discussing the situation, he brought up the interesting point that many women may be facing advancement barriers because they are not competing just with internal candidates, but with men throughout the country. He said:

We certainly try to provide training opportunities and other opportunities for anyone that might be interested in pursuing a management role, which potentially



could lead to a police chief position. Unfortunately, we are a very small organization, and it's a very difficult position to attain for anyone. What we find is that most individuals that come into police chief positions generally come from other organizations, not just here, but from throughout law enforcement. Often times the recruitment for police chief are either state wide or many times national in scope, and so the candidates come from a number of areas that provide qualified individuals, both men and women. But as far as our organization, we have recently promoted one female to the rank of sergeant here, which would certainly position her at some point in the future to continue to be competitive for a management position. And I believe she was actually the first female at the JSD to be promoted to the rank of sergeant.

*Advice to Women Aspiring to Top Level Law Enforcement Positions.* Chief Jones attempted to provide some helpful advice for individuals who would like to move up to top law enforcement positions, but declined to narrow the advice to women. His suggestions pertained to gaining experience and education. He said:

The key for men and women to perform on an equal level or on an even playing field is experience in law enforcement, experience in the field, experience perhaps in investigations, and experience in administration, experience in a broad scope that provides the opportunity for upward mobility. And I think that applies to both men and women. Also, the training, and going through the promotional process is important for both men and women. I think today education is important, because most chiefs that I know generally have at least a master's degree. Most departments require at least a bachelor's degree.

Additionally, Chief Jones emphasized the importance of “gaining the respect of peers.” He felt that is essential for one to be an effective leader in law enforcement.

Lastly, Chief Jones also spoke of the importance of goal setting:

I would say that the key to success for either sex is preparation. I think you have to be a forward thinker to say, this is where I want to be, set a goal, and make an effort to achieve it, understanding that may not necessarily occur. The truth is that there is a very small percentage of law enforcement officers in America that attain the rank of police chief in any capacity. It's highly competitive for both men and women.

*The Future for Women in Law Enforcement.* Chief Jones spoke of law enforcement as a difficult profession. He pointed out that it is becoming more difficult to recruit both men and women into law enforcement because “there are so many other more profitable careers out there to offer in these times, as well as the fact that the position is become more the subject of criticism by the public.”

Chief Jones preferred to speak to the difficulty of recruiting men and women, rather than just women. He said: “As to whether or not more or fewer women will apply, that same question applies to men.” He noted that there are “a number of areas and departments that continually have police vacancies because we simply can't get qualified recruits.” Chief Jones offered his opinion that men and women are equally successful in being accepted into the force. He stated: “I don't believe there's a higher success or fail rate [between men and women], once the application has been made.”

Considering the move into top level positions, Chief Jones went on to explain that “many people, men and women, don't necessarily want to be managers.” He continued:

When you are looking at the goal to be a police chief, there's folks that aren't always interested in assuming those responsibilities. That is, it can be a difficult position to be in at times. There is a lot of pressure on a chief of police to perform. In municipal policing, that pressure comes from city councils the city manager, and certainly from the community. The demands of the city, or the entity for which the chief works, may have very, very strict requirements that are difficult to meet for anyone. These requirements may be focusing on certain areas of crime, trying to do the job, and at the same time, maintaining the ethical criteria that we have to perform. It is just very difficult.

Chief Jones pointed out that he has been in law enforcement for many years and that he has seen quite a few changes:

I've been in this business for 36 years. When I started, we didn't have any women that were police officers in my department, and certainly to be a police chief would have been out of the question. It just wouldn't have happened. There was a strong influence in those days, the late sixties, early seventies, for prior military. It was not a requirement, but it certainly was desired. There was a greater focus on that for getting into law enforcement than there was on education.

In many cases, women have better negotiating skills than some men, and women certainly bring skills to the table that, I think in the early 70s, perhaps weren't really recognized as necessary skills. And they are now. And I think that makes women, over the last three decades at least, more competitive in this field. And that opens the doors for those same

individuals to continue to be competitive for executive management positions, which could include a chief position somewhere.

Chief Jones spoke of the importance of society in accepting women as leaders in law enforcement:

And I think it's not necessarily acceptance by the police, but also acceptance by the community that women can do this job. It is important how they perform when they are out in the field handling difficult situations, because working in the field is required before you even think about becoming a detective or a sergeant, or a lieutenant or captain or eventually a police chief. You have to possess those skills as well. And I think when all of us come through the ranks, there's a certain amount of credibility that's attached to your experience, and what has this individual done over his or her career, that makes him qualified, or makes her qualified. And when looking at all of those things, and then going through the recruitment process, a decision is made, by whoever is going to hire these people, whether it be university or a city, a state or county organization.

*Chief Lacy, Chief of Police - LPD*

Chief Lacy of the LPD is currently chief of the police department where Lola (see Case Study Three) remains after her demotion while she awaits the results of her lawsuit to reinstate her to the position that she had once attained. Note that Chief Lacy was hired since Lola's demotion to help the department to "reinvent itself" after a period of scandal and discrimination. He provided the following information.

*Views on Women as Top Leaders in Law Enforcement Agencies.* Chief Lacy

voiced his opinion about the impact of women in law enforcement:

Women changed the whole role of how police were supposed to do their jobs because once women got in the profession, the job was no longer viewed as something done by really strong men who had to use physical force to control people. It became more a job based on reasoning with people and using good human skills to manage behavior.

Chief Lacy referred to the more inclusive and less directive style leadership that is generally attributed to women. However, he also spoke of the other side of the equation:

To be successful, women still have to deal with the same issues that the males have to deal with, and so at the end of the day whether you are male or female, you have still got to provide the best services and deal with the internal issues and morale and try to keep major incidents from happening.

*The Equality of the Advancement Opportunities Afforded to Women.* Concerning the issue of women moving up the ranks, Chief Lacy stated that he is in favor of promoting women. He said: "In my view, I'm probably more attracted to a style of management and supervision that women may generally exercise more than the males do." But he recognized that people will vary in their views on the topic of promoting women to the top. He said: "I think it depends really on who is making the selection, what kind of traits and style they most prefer in their command officers, and whether males or females may more likely fit into that category."

Chief Lacy pointed out that in order to get promoted to a chief level position, one generally needs "a good reputation, both personally and professionally, and I think

women entering the profession probably understand that better than the guys do.”

Consistent with the idea of the double standard for women, Chief Lacy held the opinion that “women understand that they just have to be pretty careful and discreet how they manage their personal lives because they can be under an even brighter microscope than the guys are.”

Yet when specifically asked if he was referring to the idea of the double standard, he equivocated: “I don’t know that there’s a double standard any different in policing than there is anywhere else in our society.” He continued by pointing out that a benefit of law enforcement for women is that many raises are merit based. He explained:

I’ve always thought that in some ways policing is a more fair environment for women to be successful in than a lot of other occupations because promotions are generally made through civil service. Additionally, in policing as in government in general, there is an expectation the department be diverse, and part of that diversity means women being in key management positions.

Chief Lacy took the position that there is more diversity overall in law enforcement than in the business sector. He said: “Look at corporate executives and you don’t see nearly the amount of diversity that we have in our organizations.” He went on to list the number of people from various ethnic groups in the LPD. He concluded that women have more opportunities for advancement to top management positions in law enforcement than they have in the private sector. However, when asked how many women the LPD has at the top, he acknowledged there to be only one sworn assistant chief who is a woman.

*Advice to Women Aspiring to Top Level Law Enforcement Positions.* Chief Lacy advised women to do three things: “Go get their education, work hard, and recognize that they’re establishing a reputation from the first time they come to work in the department.” Chief Lacy emphasized the importance of a good reputation. He stated that for both men and women, it is important that they have a reputation for being the kind of person that should be promoted. He said that he had not been able to promote people on many occasions because “they were viewed as not working hard enough and not caring enough about the broader interests of the department to the exclusion of their own where it makes it very difficult to promote them, because even if they could change, their reputation developed over time follows them forever.”

*The Future for Women in Law Enforcement.* Chief Lacy made the observation that women are likely to fare better in large police departments than in the smaller ones due to the fact that there are more position openings available to move into. Furthermore, he reiterated his thoughts on the relative fairness and growth opportunities for women in law enforcement compared to the business world. However, Chief Lacy recognized that women could “confront some kind of ceiling in the organization depending on how well they may do on a written promotional exam or who the people in charge are at the time when they attempt to get promoted.”

#### *Chief Vance, Chief of Police – VPD*

Chief Vance is chief of the VPD where Valerie (see Part A of this Chapter) was Captain and where Amanda and Belinda, the women from the pilot study (see Chapter I) were employed and at one time aspired to be chief. He received his position a few years

ago, and Amanda and Belinda subsequently left the organization. Valerie and her female supervisor remain there at the time of this writing, although it was stated that Valerie's supervisor is retiring, leaving Valerie as the highest ranking woman at the VPD. Chief Vance provided the following information.

*Views on Women as Top Leaders in Law Enforcement Agencies.* Chief Vance expressed his opinion that women can do a "successful job" as top leaders in law enforcement when given the opportunity. When asked if women have been given fair and equal opportunities for advancement in the VPD, he replied "absolutely." He said they have several "ladies" in top positions at the VPD, and he mentioned the female Captain (i.e. Valerie) and the female Assistant Chief who are the top ranking women at that organization.

When asked why there have not been any women chiefs yet at the VPD, he spoke of the retirement program that exists which requires that if someone elects for early retirement, then they have to leave the organization within a limited amount of time, thus shortening the amount of time in which they can compete for the top level position. He mentioned that the top ranking woman at the VPD (i.e. Valerie's supervisor, the Assistant Chief) has elected to take the early retirement program and therefore will not be competing for chief when the position next becomes available.

*The Equality of the Advancement Opportunities Afforded to Women.* Concerning the failure of more women to become chiefs in law enforcement organizations, Chief Vance stated that women are "too aggressive" in attempting to reach the top and "do not wait their turn." He expressed his opinion that women too frequently turn to the legal system for recourse by filing lawsuits if they do not succeed. Chief Vance mentioned that



there had been some women candidates who were internal possibilities when he was selected as chief of the VPD, but that his experience outweighed their qualifications.

*Advice to Women Aspiring to Top Level Law Enforcement Positions.* Chief Vance noted that in order to effectively compete for chief, candidates should have worked through all of the positions rather than just working in the exciting or convenient areas. He stated that many people want to do the “fun” jobs like vice and SWAT. He pointed out that many individuals are “reluctant” to get into areas such as research or finance that provide them a good background for chief.

Chief Vance felt that many people focus on one area too much and stay in one position too long, which does not give them the experience needed for the top command level. He emphasized that it is very important to have a “varied background” in law enforcement in order to be a good candidate for the chief’s spot. His position is similar to what some of the other male chiefs and women participants expressed, and is consistent with sentiments in the business industry as well.

He stressed the importance of having a wide breadth of work experience. He said that “it is worth a weight in gold” when it comes to moving to the top. Chief Vance also advised that women get their education because it is valuable in obtaining promotions. He said that to make it to the top in law enforcement, women should set out a career plan that includes getting an education and working through many of the important departments in law enforcement.

Chief Vance expanded on the importance of gaining experience with outside agencies rather than relying on the opportunities of internal advancement. He advised that generally people will obtain more of the necessary experience by working in several

different agencies and then applying for chief at a different agency. Speaking of his own experiences, he described his background in several different agencies before being selected as chief of the VPD. He insisted that his superior background accounted for why he received the appointment, and was selected over the internal candidates, including several highly qualified women who had spent their entire careers at the VPD and were denied the top spot.

*The Future for Women in Law Enforcement.* Chief Vance believes that there will be great opportunities for women to advance in law enforcement in the future to the extent that more women continue to apply. He qualified this by referring to the need for women in the future to recognize the essential need of gaining experience and having a well-rounded background in policing.

*Chief Williams, Chief of the WPD*

Chief Williams is chief of the organization where Winifred (see Case Study Nine) is employed. It is one of the largest organizations of its type and somewhat of a prototype to other organizations in terms of providing equal opportunities for careers advancement for women and minorities. His organization reflects his progressive outlook and ideals. Winifred had mentioned that she found her chief to be very supportive of women.

In fact, Chief Williams has a reputation for being a champion for women's causes as well as an advocate for minority issues in general. Possibly he came by his views because of his high level of education as holder of a doctorate degree, or maybe it is due to his Latino background. Or perhaps it is because of the millions of dollars that his organization was paying in sexual harassment lawsuits brought by women before his

tenure in office. His predecessor had begun a commitment to zero tolerance against sexual harassment, and Chief Williams continued that stance, making it a high priority in his administration.

Regardless of the reason, the actions taken by Chief Williams in changing the departmental culture of the WPD are cutting-edge with respect to equality in the hiring of women and minorities and readiness to place women in combat positions. He describes himself as a social services practitioner unless the situation is threatening and requires exception. Chief Williams is truly a very forward-thinking and progressive law enforcement leader.

*Views on Women as Top Leaders in Law Enforcement Agencies.* Chief Williams expressed his belief that “women are really terrific at jumping in and taking positions of leadership at the sergeant, lieutenant, captain and higher levels.” He personally set out to provide a model for other similar organizations in the United States by having women in command positions.

*The Equality of the Advancement Opportunities Afforded to Women.* Chief Williams proudly announced that in his department, “women are fully integrated in all positions of authority.” His department has a policy of starting academy classes only if they have a minimum of 25 percent women. According to Chief Williams, the policy is “to create equity in the organization and we have an equity oversight panel to ensure that no persons, particularly women, are discriminated against.”

He reported that system is working very well, and that there are women at the highest level in the organization as division chiefs, as well as in other middle management positions. When asked how the male officers react to this policy, he

acknowledged that “some of them get a little bent out of shape because of the percent of women that are promoted, but most of them understand that when tests are validated, there is no discrimination against anybody, and then they pretty well accept that.”

When asked why he felt that there are not more women at top levels, Chief Williams stated:

I think what happens in organizations, like law enforcement organizations, is that the culture of different units becomes overwhelmingly male oriented and that causes women not to want to go work there because they feel that they are not going to be respected as an equal partner, especially with SWAT teams and some of the more difficult assignments which could include something like the homicide bureau where the work hours are so difficult.”

Chief Williams feels that “there is a need for every law enforcement agency in the United States to have a very strong policy against the discrimination of women.” He proudly described the core values of his organization which include a strong position against sexism and racism. The department’s stated core values encourage respect for human dignity and specifically prohibit bigotry of any form. He stated that he believes that women are particularly protected in his organization.

*Advice to Women Aspiring to Top Level Law Enforcement Positions.* Chief Williams encourages women to “remain competitive” and to get their college degree, and to take leadership training courses. He also suggested that they attain master’s degrees when possible.

*The Future for Women in Law Enforcement.* Chief Williams noted that there are some examples of women taking the top leadership positions in law enforcement. He

named several women that he knew who had recently assumed chief level positions. He made the point that “the best way to get women at the top in more chief’s positions is to make sure that the path to going up the chain of command is without any obstacles and any prejudice against women.” When asked how that can be accomplished, he referred to the importance of core values, an equity oversight process that ensures that there are no biases in selecting people, and a fair testing system that promotes women at a level equitable to their number within the department.

In his organization, he sets a policy that a certain percentage of promotions are of women. This policy is to promote a higher percentage of women than are in the organization’s work force. He believes that this is not unfair to the males, but that it is the correct thing to do because “we know there are qualified women who need to grow in the organization.” His ultimate goal is to get women in half of all positions.

Chief Williams stated his views concerning why there are not more women in the top position in law enforcement agencies:

Too few qualified women apply because I think they see the job as a scary job. I think they see it as a man’s job more than a woman’s job. And thus, because of fear, family priority, and culture that the law enforcement community is judged to be, meaning it is all action and all shootings and all pursuits and all SWAT teams and stuff like that, there’s a huge disincentive for women to join law enforcement. There is the stereotyping that you’ve got to be a big brute in order to work in law enforcement.

He described the growth opportunities available for women in the WPD:

We emphasize having great interpersonal skills, having a very good mind, making decisions, being a leader, being interested in learning. We emphasize that women are vital to protecting the public. And so I think clearly we are reaching our goals by saying that we are an open organization and women have tremendous opportunities to grow and become our great leaders.

A true leader, Chief Williams referred to the size of his organization and stated: "My job is to work with my leaders in the organization and stay abreast of modern times and actually create a new model of law enforcement by changing our culture." He summed up the importance of the contribution of women in law enforcement:

Women help our culture a lot. We do a lot of good things beyond just the policing role. We're heavily involved in social programs for the community at all levels, and we're heavily involved in charitable fund raising activities for the community as well. And all of these make for a very balanced organization. And most law enforcement agencies don't see that they're not balanced, but the balance means that you have the influence of women leading as well as men leading and what happens there is you have a better sense of how to serve the community. If it's all just guys leading the charge, what happens is that they get to inbreed themselves more. Women tend to be, in my opinion, more social oriented in their capable leadership skills. So both the men and the women are trading off with each other and teaching each other skills of leadership. The more you have that balance and that mix between men and women, the better off the public will be served.

Part C: Information Interview – Diane Skoog

Chief Diana Skoog, Executive Director, National Association of Women Law Enforcement Executives (NAWLEE)

Chief Diane Skoog was asked about the number of women police chiefs in the United States. She stated clearly that it is extremely difficult to get accurate statistics on the number of women police chiefs. She said: “You’re never going to get an accurate count.” She explained why: “The reason for that is there is no central place or no requirement for every agency to register somewhere, with their statistics.” She explained that her organization receives many requests for this data:

We get asked this question all the time, we get asked this, day one, since we organized back in 1997, and it is impossibility. The only thing we can give you is an estimate. And the reason we can give you an estimate is the woman that did that study in 2001, Professor Dorothy Schultz, has made a career out of studying, following women in CEOs, law enforcement CEOs, and at the time, she was using the figure of 150 female chiefs in the United States, and now she’s bumped it up to 200. So the estimate is approximately 200 female chiefs in the United States.

When asked to clarify how recent that data is, she replied “That would be as of now.” She further clarified that the 200 number includes chiefs of university and college departments, acknowledging that a lot of the female chiefs are employed as campus chiefs.

Chief Skoog agreed that the number of women chiefs indicates that women are advancing into the top levels of law enforcement, but she emphasized that the trend is

deceptive. She replied: "I get to travel all over the country, and I think right now, women are taking a step backwards." When asked to explain, she said:

I think it was in 2004, all of a sudden, we had about six women appointed chiefs to major cities. We got Boston, Detroit, and San Francisco. Now, for a woman to be appointed chief in those very, very large agencies, that was a tremendous step forward for us. Since then, we've had nothing. And, in fact, some like [Kathleen O'Toole] are leaving the Boston one. What we're finding is the younger women coming in today don't want rank.

Chief Skoog said that she has asked them why and they report that it is because of family pressures and trying to work the shifts they are given, and that it is difficult with their children and husbands. However, she pointed out that this problem does not exist once the officers achieve rank. Junior officers do get the night shifts, but after they get seniority, they can get the shift they want. She concluded that many of the newer women coming up the ranks do not want the top positions.

Chief Skoog explained that she is a retired chief of middle age who moved through the ranks while raising two children. She speculated that possibly the newer generation of women in law enforcement have a different attitude toward their careers. She said "maybe my generation was different in some way." She speculated that maybe the younger women are observing the difficulty that the pioneer women have had in moving up: "The younger ones can see that women are attaining rank. It can be done. But it's not easy. It's a tough fight."

Chief Skoog said that more women are obviously coming into law enforcement than was the case when she began her career, but that "they just don't have the drive for



achieving rank, it doesn't seem to fit in their lifestyle." She said that many of the women state that they don't want the responsibility and want to stay where they are because the schedule they have works well for their family life. Chief Skoog was perplexed by this and felt it to be an important question. She stated: "I wish I knew the answer, because certainly that would give us something that we could work towards correcting."

Chief Skoog offered some advice for women hoping to move up the ladder in law enforcement. She said that "first of all, you have to be educated and articulate. You have to be able to communicate. You have got to have those abilities coming in the door." She noted that the nature of the job has changed: "You don't go down the street and beat people up, like you used to years ago. It is not the tough cop on the beat like in the old days. Today, it's all verbal skills."

She also mentioned the importance of mentors and stressed the utility of formal mentoring programs. Chief Skoog feels that women still encounter opposition. She said: "I think that the profession itself is very receptive to having women come in the door, but the message is *don't get too cocky, don't go too high.*"

The interview with Chief Skoog was valuable in several respects. The points that she made concerning why more of the younger women are not as interested in moving up the ranks are similar in many respects to those made by Valerie in Part A as well as by some of the police chiefs in Part B. Additionally, some of the clarification that she provided about the number of women chiefs helped put in context the issue of whether women are truly breaking through the glass ceiling in law enforcement. These issues will be discussed further in Chapter VI as conclusions are drawn from the data that were presented in Chapters IV and V.

## **CHAPTER VI: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS**

In this chapter, conclusions will be drawn from the data that were collected from the primary participants as introduced in Chapters IV and the supplementary interviews presented in Chapter V. The data provided by the primary participants are developed into the cases of “barriers to equal advancement.” In this chapter, these barriers are presented and analyzed with respect to their influence on the ability of women in law enforcement to have equal access to opportunities to advance to the top rank.

Nine women were interviewed for this study about how the glass ceiling in law enforcement operates to prevent more women from reaching the level of chief of police. These women participants occupied top leadership positions in the United States and had gone through the selection process for chief or were qualified for the position due to their levels of experience and tenure. In either regard, the women had been exposed to the politics of the struggle upwards. Their interviews are contained in Chapter IV.

Other individuals were interviewed for the study and provided supplementary data. These interviews included six male chiefs who voiced their opinions about the opportunities available to women aspiring to move to the top position. These men occupy the chief positions at organizations where the primary participants were employed or applied to serve as chief. They provide comment on the existence of promotional barriers in law enforcement and offer advice to women hoping to move up the organizational rank.

In addition, two other women were interviewed for their perspectives. These included a police captain who was somewhat lower in organizational position than the

primary participants and a retired chief who also serves as an officer of an organization for women law enforcement leaders. Supplementary interviews are presented in Chapter V.

The comments obtained in supplementary interviewing, particularly the “alternative perspective” interviews of six male police chiefs, serve as a point of comparison to the primary participants who described their own perceptions of the struggles they themselves faced in moving up the career ladder. Together, the interviews provide a comprehensive look at gender issues in the law enforcement community, as the problems and strategies for women advancing in this field are sorted and probed.

### Summary

This section provides summaries of the information gained through the research. The findings on the barriers to equal advancement opportunity and the findings on advancement strategies are treated in separate sections.

#### *Barriers to Equal Advancement Opportunity*

The barriers to equal advancement opportunity are considered as the cases for analysis in this research. There were seven identified barriers to success that were found to create a lack of equal advancement opportunity. In order of frequency of mention, they are: (a) double standard, (b) the old boys club, (c) queen bee and other women, (d) disloyalty, (e) personal traits, (f) race, and (g) recruitment procedures. The impact of barriers on equal advancement opportunity is displayed in Figure 6.1.

The barriers to advancement were derived from data analysis through indexing and coding of the primary interviews. Parallels and themes are located and examined. In

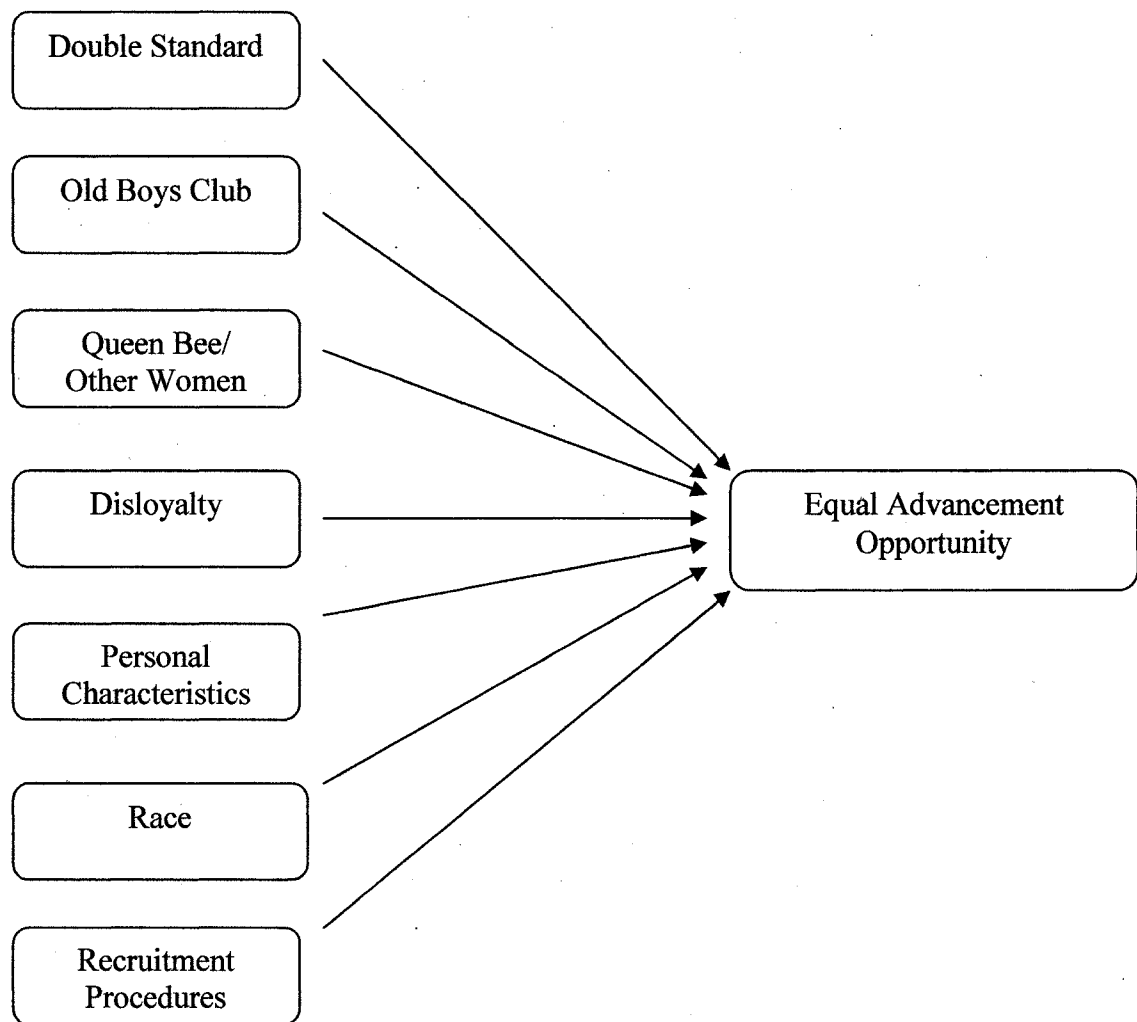


Figure Caption

*Figure 6.1.* The barriers that create unequal advancement opportunities

the analysis and discussion, specific mention is made of the ways in which the barriers impacted the equal advancement opportunities of the individual participant who mentioned each factor.

It is possible, and in many cases likely, that each of the advancement barriers may have also been active in the careers of other participants who did not mention them. The open-ended nature of the interviews allowed the participants the freedom to mention whatever barriers they felt had been of impact upon their career advancement opportunities.

These barriers are presented in order of frequency of mention, not necessarily in order of importance. No attempt is made to compare the impact of these barriers upon career success other than to note the frequency of the mention of each by the participants. Table 4.1 was presented in Chapter IV and showed the advancement issues, or barriers, that each participant mentioned.

#### *Double Standard*

A double standard is defined as “any code or set of principles containing different provisions for one group of people than for another” (Random House Unabridged Dictionary, 2006). The impact of the double standard was mentioned by six of the nine participants. They explained it in different ways.

Evelyn experienced the double standard of being expected to fit within an “acceptable range of perception” that is “narrower” for women. She felt that men looked at her as they felt she should be rather than what she was. She also thought that men “internalize” their negative feelings about women rather than “deal with it” as they would with a man. She found this to be the case when women have a different opinion than the

men because she felt that the men “want to hear you cajole, agree, conform, be subordinate.”

Evelyn had specific examples that had given her this impression. She mentioned a meeting about her promotion where she was criticized for being too strong or harsh while men who were also of strong personality types were not criticized.

Hazel noticed a double standard whereby her mistakes were “magnified” when she did not think that a man’s mistakes would be given as much attention. She also felt that a woman’s mistakes were attributed to her gender rather than just being considered a “human” misstep.

Lola noticed a reaction when she was “outspoken” and disagreed with something. She felt she was sometimes considered to not be a “team member” and thought of as being “uncooperative,” whereas a man who disagreed was simply found to be having a difference of opinion or “acting as a commander.”

Prudence encountered the double standard in a similar way to Hazel when she found that “any slip up at all” is damaging to a woman whereas it could have no impact on a man. Thus, a woman has to work harder to succeed. Prudence had reported to a sergeant who thought women should not be in the workplace. He was opposed to them working out of the home, away from their roles as “wives and mothers.”

Ramona saw the double standard operate with respect to the women leaving long workdays to go home to their personal responsibilities as wife and mother, as the men relaxed at home while their wives handled the domestic chores. She found this to lengthen her workday beyond that of her male counterparts, and the frustration was

compounded by the fact that the men did not realize the additional personal responsibilities that women have during their off-duty time.

Perhaps more exasperating, Ramona found a double standard existing in the access to training opportunities. She recounted a special training opportunity that she had to “fight” to get because it wasn’t being offered to women since there were no two women in need of the training who could allow the department to take advantage of double occupancy in sleeping quarters. She flatly stated that without this training, she would not have been promoted to her chief level spot.

Winifred described the double standard in terms of women “needing to try harder than men” in order to succeed. She clarified how women can’t take any “short cuts” in the route upwards because people would point out that they had not worked in a certain division that was necessary for advancement, or had not worked in it long enough to advance. And yet, a man could miss an area along the way, and it would just be “understood” that he could do the job.

Winifred also found that women cannot “trade on favors,” while men can. She observed that women are criticized for doing so, and yet that process is accepted for men. Winifred described how a woman’s abilities are questioned more than are a man’s when taking on a new assignment. She felt it almost an automatic response for people to question whether a woman got a promotion because of her gender or because she deserved it. She concluded that “for women, it is all about having to prove yourself in different positions that you can do the job.”

### *Old Boys Club*

Six of the nine participants also confirmed the existence of the “Old Boys Club” in law enforcement. They told of the various ways in which it had presented barriers to success in their careers.

For Evelyn, the “Old Boys Club” represented a group of men who were glad to see women fail in their attempts to reach the top of the organization. She was of the opinion that when women failed, it seemed to validate the men’s negative opinions about any competence the women may have.

Prudence came up against the “Old Boys Club” when she learned that the female city manager was being replaced by a male who plays golf with the current chief. She recognized that this impacted her chances for being selected by the male city manager for the upcoming chief’s opening. This conclusion was shared by others, as evidenced by their suggestion that she “take up golf.”

Prudence drew a connection between the “Old Boys Club” and the lack of support, or disloyalty, that women face in law enforcement organizations. When speaking of the police chiefs’ organization and how it would provide less support for women chiefs than it would for the males, Prudence described that organization as a “good old boys group with all the rights of passage.”

Quinn observed that women are not equally represented at the chief level to some degree due to the unavailability of SWAT assignments for women, seemingly reserved for only members of the “Old Boys Club.” Although in some agencies, SWAT is not an important assignment, in many law enforcement agencies it is vital. Quinn felt that the exclusion of women from SWAT “handicapped” her career advancement.



Ramona described feeling like an “outsider” in the organization where she has worked for over 20 years because of the “Old Boys Club” subculture. She stated that this “male-dominated society” does their “own thing” to the exclusion of female colleagues.

Even Stella acknowledged the barriers to career progress that are due to the “Old Boys Club.” Once again, tying the “Old Boys Club” to the “disloyalty” barrier, she attributed some of the lack of support that she had received from men during her career to “the fact of women not being included in the ‘Old Boys Club.’” She lamented that no matter how many male friendships she cultivated, in law enforcement “as a woman, you are still an outsider.”

Winifred found “certain camaraderie” among men in policing and had observed the trading of favors through a “system of paybacks” from which women were excluded. Winifred refused the “Old Boys Club” term, but felt like she was “working in an alien culture.” And again she tied the existence of the subculture to the “support” that men give each other in the “Old Boys Club,” a networking system that serves as an obstacle to advancement for those excluded from its sphere of control.

### *Queen Bee and Other Women*

The term “queen bee” refers to “a woman who is in a favored or preeminent position” (Random House Unabridged Dictionary, 2006). Five of the nine women discussed the problems that women create for each other, three of them referring specifically to the “queen bee” syndrome and two discussing related issues. Evelyn pointed out that the double standard is also applied to women by other women: “We as women won’t admit that we’re treating a woman differently than we’re treating a man.” She also noted that “gender discrimination against women doesn’t always come from just

men” and that oftentimes “the women are even harsher on a female leader than the males are.” Evelyn attributed this to the fact of women judging the way other women do things and feeling that other women are competition.

Evelyn explained that women still commonly put down other women in their organizations in law enforcement. She felt that this is done in order to “fit in.” She explained that to many women such acceptance is worth “putting down” other women in front of the men in order to be accepted by the men because “that is more important than showing integrity.”

Evelyn also described the situation where men would select a certain woman and make her feel that although they generally did not accept women officers, she was an “exception,” the “queen bee.” And this “queen bee” would eagerly go along with this designation due, in Evelyn’s opinion, to low self-esteem or the need to “fit in with the guys.” In this scenario, the newly designated “queen bee” would “put down all the other women” in order to be accepted by the men, thereby accomplishing the intended task of destroying support among the women. (This description of the “queen bee” is consistent with the role played by Caroline as described in the pilot study.)

Lola described the “queen bee” aspects of the actions of Maribelle, the woman she supervised, who went to one of Lola’s peers to complain about her. Lola felt that a man would not have done this and that Maribelle “used her gender” to solve her problems and get attention from the men. Lola was concerned about the situation she had observed where women who use their gender for their own purposes “create problems for other women because of the examples they set.”

Quinn failed to receive the chief position at her agency the first time she applied, and attributes that directly to the fact that the city manager at that time was a woman who held a personal grudge against her. Quinn felt that the underlying issue in the personal conflict was that this female city manager was “threatened by having another strong woman in a position of power in the city government.” Quinn described her as a “queen bee” in a work environment where most of the other department heads were men. Quinn was adamant that she would never have become chief if this female city manager had not retired.

Women were shown to create barriers to the advancement of other women in ways different from the “queen bee” phenomenon. Naila had described a situation where the wife of a man she supervised questioned her authority to supervise her husband. As a sergeant, Naila was surprised at this woman, who was a secretary in the department, to be questioning her authority as a sergeant, a situation that she knew a man would never have faced. And Naila had trouble from the girlfriend of a man who had at one time sexually harassed Naila. This girlfriend had actually threatened Naila for damaging the male officer’s career, when he was the one who had been the offender.

An additional problem that women create for other women was mentioned by Prudence, who expressed concern about the negative impact of a woman’s reputation on other women. She said: “The reputation of one woman quickly becomes the reputation for every woman.” Essentially, Prudence worried that women as a group are blamed for the actions or mistakes of one individual woman officer.

*Disloyalty: Lack of Trust and Support*

Four of the nine participants spoke of the barriers that were presented due to the lack of trust or support they received from males. One participant discussed this in terms of support, and three discussed it in terms of trust. However, the ideas that they conveyed appear to be related in certain ways. The absence of the two factors of trust and support as described by the participants comprise what is commonly known as “disloyalty,” the term that is assigned to describe this barrier.

*Trust.* Evelyn considered the various dimensions of trust. She spoke of trust in terms of her fears that if she were viewed by her followers as “disingenuous,” it would impact the level of trust they have in her. She also focused on the impact it had on her success when she was not given the freedom to “lead in her own way.” She attributed this to not being accepted for “who she was,” a reference to her frustration about the restrictions on her ability to be herself. Not being allowed to lead independently and being pulled back after taking steps with her staff in certain directions indicated to her a situation where she was not trusted or supported by her supervisors.

Evelyn found that she was being made into a “puppet” and being told “how to lead.” Not being allowed “to lead in her own way” represented to her a lack of trust to which someone at her level should be entitled. She found the situation unacceptable because being mistrusted by those to whom she reported caused her to in turn lose the trust of her followers, resulting in obstacles to her success.

Lola reported having been questioned about her hiring decisions following her selection of minority candidates. She had once hired a female commander and sometimes selected people of color, and she felt her decisions came under suspicion and her

authority was questioned. An apparent loss of trust was evidenced by criticisms of her management decisions and intimidations prohibiting the future hiring of many women or people of color. These apparent efforts to stop her from hiring women and minorities could have been the intended purposes of intimidation, but without further evidence, on the surface they seem to indicate apparent loss of trust.

Naila noted a change in the way she was treated after the incident where she refused “inappropriate overtures” from the sergeant to whom she reported. After her strong reaction to him, she was criticized and second-guessed not only concerning her job performance but with respect to minute details about her self and her appearance. Similar to the situation with Lola, taken on face value these criticisms could be intentional. They could be indicative of efforts to change the way she spoke on the radio or the color of her fingernail polish, but the resulting effect of the continual questioning displays a lack of professional trust.

*Support.* Prudence explained that a chief needs support from the officers in the rank and file. In the event that a woman became police chief without the protection of the people below her in the organization, she would face the strong possibility of failure. Prudence suspected that the layer below the level of chief is likely to take care of the chief more “when it’s a man in that chief’s position.” She said that a chief needs the support of other chiefs which would be “easier for a male chief to garner.” Thus, lack of support operates not only to prevent women from achieving promotions to the top, but also sets them up to fail when they prevail to reach that goal.

As used by the participants, disloyalty is a barrier consisting of at least the two components of lack of trust and lack of support. This is consistent with the organizational

behavior literature in which loyalty is considered to be a multi-dimensional concept. For example, the research by Truckenbrodt (2000) described the “in-group” subordinates as having “mutual trust, positive support, and shared loyalty, among other qualities (p. 234).

*Personal Traits: Appearance and Personality*

Personal traits such as appearance and personality were mentioned as important barriers to success for three of the nine participants. One of the participants mentioned both as perceived obstacles. There appears to be some relationship between the two aspects of personal traits.

*Appearance.* Prudence found the issue of appearance to present a barrier to her goals to become chief. Prudence was considered as overweight by some individuals in the department, and she found that it prevented her from being perceived as “chief” material. While she observed that overweight men were not discussed in a negative vein, she found that comments were directed to her about how her weight would prevent her from “looking good” in a chief’s uniform.

Evelyn found the issue of appearance to present obstacles to success for different reasons. Evelyn was a very attractive woman, a problem to her because men admittedly found that at times it prevented them from taking her seriously as a manager. Evelyn observed that a strong personality was necessary to succeed in law enforcement, and yet as a woman she was discouraged from revealing her true strength.

Evelyn spoke a great deal about “subordination” of her identity. She felt that she needed to walk a fine line between not appearing too feminine and attractive, and yet not too masculine. She felt required to retain her female identity and yet show the requisite aggressive side. And linked to personality in that she felt compelled to seem assertive and

more serious than her feminine side sometimes allowed. She found the two sides of herself to be incongruous, and the strain prevented her from expressing her true identity.

*Personality.* Another aspect of the personality component of this barrier is the “upbeat” and “animated” side of Evelyn’s personality that she was not allowed to reveal if she wanted to be accepted as a true leader. She felt compelled to keep this side of her true self “in the box.” Evelyn described the conflict that she felt as a struggle to “be genuine.”

Quinn discussed the impact of women changing their personalities or “losing their own identity” by attempting to become part of the “Old Boys Club.” She noted that it is harder for women to “be their own person” due to the pressures to fit in with the men and become enmeshed in the “club.” She saw dangers to both the organization and the women themselves if women “lost their identity” through joining in the “Old Boys Club.” This concern was similar to Evelyn’s desire to “be genuine.”

*Race: The Double Whammy*

A “double whammy” is described as a “combination of two unfortunate or negative circumstances or events” (Webster’s New Millennium Dictionary of English, 2003-2005). Being a woman and a person of color is generally discussed as a “double whammy” for purposes of describing the double impact of discrimination. That is, the women of color attempting to advance their careers face additional “stressors” of racial discrimination as well as gender-related barriers.

Three of the nine primary participants were people of color. Two of them had found race to be a significant obstacle to advancement, while one experienced race to the advantage. The two who considered race an obstacle discussed it in conjunction with

gender. It is important to note that since the barriers are listed in order of mention, race is placed deceptively low on the list. That placement is misleading with regard to the significance of the impact of race because even though only two women mentioned race as a barrier, there were only three women of color in the sample, and two thirds of them cited race. It is very likely that if the sample were comprised of more women of color, the obstacles to equal advancement created by racial discrimination would be mentioned by more than two participants.

There were generally no perceivable solely gender-related issues among the women of color. Race and gender were always discussed together by the women of color. Two of the three women saw race as a disadvantage, while one had found it to be of benefit. That participant felt that her gender, but not her race, had imposed advancement barriers. However, none of the three discussed gender inequality without mentioning race.

Lola spoke of the impact on her career from being of Latino descent. She attributed having been demoted to not being accepted as a "female minority." She reported that minorities need to "struggle" more even though the racist overtones are not as obvious. Lola linked race to the problem of the "double standard" by pointing out that she "always felt that you had to do whatever the males or white females would do in order to get recognition."

The situation wherein Lola's judgment on hiring was questioned after she once selected a male candidate ties the lack of trust concept to the racial barrier. Losing her status as the highest ranking Hispanic female in her organization, Lola was aware that her



demotion satisfied racist objectives: "I'm sure there are some people that feel glad that they took out a minority female. I have heard that."

Naila was very candid with her views on racial barriers. Describing her fearlessness of the dangers inherent in her chosen career, Naila made it clear: "Where I had the difficulty was that some of the folks here didn't think I ought to be here because I was a woman. They didn't think I should be here because I'm a black woman." Despite those objections, Naila remains in a top position, awaiting her chance for the chief's seat.

Ramona, however, considered the race factor to have worked to her advantage. She felt that her Latino descent served to help her advance since she represented a large percent of the population that she served. She alone of the women of color spoke of the gender-related issues of discrimination apart from the racial issues. Possibly Ramona's situation was different from that of the other two women of color in regard to the section of the country in which Ramona resided and the extremely large and progressive organization in which she worked.

#### *Recruitment Procedures*

Two of the nine participants discussed issues related to recruitment to top positions that they felt had hindered or threatened their career success. In both situations, it appeared that the emphasis on "political correctness" in recruitment by considering women and minority candidates presented some problems and concerns to the participants.

Naila found that the recruitment procedures themselves presented barriers, and in various ways she learned that the recruiters who many times handle the selection process are measured by their results in bringing in a diverse pool of candidates. Therefore, she

had been enticed to compete for a position that she was not interested in simply because of pressures brought to bear by the recruiter who needed to meet diversity quotas.

After being pushed into the competition process for a job she didn't even want, Naila was further dismayed to find inappropriate questions asked of her regarding such issues as her husband's opinion about her taking the job. She generally felt that she had been a "pawn" in the drive for politically correct recruitment, with no regard for her interests and no respect for her personage.

Prudence felt that recruitment procedures are biased, but not because of racial issues. She also complained of the recruiters who actively solicit women candidates to fulfill quotas. Prudence felt that she would rather get the position for the "right reasons," referring to her substantial qualifications, rather than for an organization to be able to demonstrate its diversity in considering female applicants. Prudence pointed out that the recruiters will go so far as to inform the women candidates that the hiring organization will consider women for the job.

Prudence was adamant that she did not want to be a "poster child," but wanted to get a promotion on her own merit. It was clearly for this reason that Prudence resisted openly competing for the upcoming chief's position in her organization. She saw that the promotion was slated for her male colleague, and she did not want to compete just to satisfy gender-related recruitment requirements. Her comment that she would not have a chance for selection for chief since the female city manager was retiring links recruitment procedures to the problems presented by the "Old Boys Club," compounding their impact on equal advancement opportunities for women in law enforcement.

*Summary of Barriers to Advancement Opportunity*

Of the seven barriers to success that were discussed by the participants, two of them were identified more frequently than the others. The doubled standard and the boys club were the barriers to equal advancement that were specified the most. Six of the nine participants mentioned both of these problems as significant barriers to success. Closely following those were the barriers imposed by the “queen bee” and other women, as referred to by five women. Disloyalty, or lack of trust and support, was mentioned by four of the participants. Personal traits and race were two barriers that were each mentioned in three interviews. Recruitment procedures were alluded to in the interviews with two participants.

*Advancement Strategies Suggested by the Participants*

The advice provided in this section was taken from the interviews of the primary participants. For the most part, it was the result of direct responses by the participants to questions about the advice they would provide to up and coming women leaders in law enforcement. However, the advice offered was also extracted from the coping mechanisms that the participants professed to have utilized themselves and from other comments the participants made throughout the interviews.

The advancement strategies offered in this section are covered in descending order of frequency of mention by the participants. They are: (a) mentoring, (b) commitment, (c) job competence, (d) education, (e) reputation, and (f) work/life balance. The strategies that the participants acknowledging utilizing for themselves as well as the ones they suggested can be seen in Table 4.1 in Chapter IV.

As with the discussion of barriers to equal advancement opportunities, it is likely that many of the participants would have been in agreement about all of these strategies. Reference is only made to certain participants because they are the ones who generated the ideas. Because of the methodology used, the advice was generated by each participant rather than each participant being asked if they agreed with certain advancement strategies. The advice gained from the interviews with each of the participants is summarized and grouped into meaningful categories and presented below in order of frequency of mention.

### *Mentoring*

Seven of the nine participants addressed the importance of mentoring each other. Mentoring was discussed in both the formal and informal sense. Some of the women were referring to formal local mentoring programs or even through national organizations for women in law enforcement, while others spoke merely of the informal exchange of ideas among women colleagues. The participants discussed some of the pros and cons of mentoring programs and analyzed some of the reasons why mentoring may be resisted or used in ineffective ways.

Evelyn astutely noted that women may fear mentoring another woman because the other woman then becomes competition and may eventually outperform the mentor. However, as Evelyn made clear, such progression is how the process should work and women should not feel threatened by the outcomes of mentoring. She encouraged women to allow the natural growth that results from mentoring to occur.

Hazel was also a strong proponent of mentoring. She herself was mentored by men, but she explained that she had developed an appreciation of the importance of female mentoring later in her career.

Naila was serious about her responsibility to mentor other more junior women. She felt that her efforts were stifled because of the reluctance of the other women to openly discuss their career goals or to approach her for advice, thus inhibiting Naila's efforts to prepare them to advance.

Prudence felt that mentoring would help prevent women from "falling into some of the common traps in law enforcement such as drinking and infidelity." She also made the important point that mentoring is valuable to the woman who mentors because the competence of the person receiving mentoring establishes the "legacy" of the mentor.

Quinn advised women to engage in mentoring. She also described the "mutual" aspect of the impact of mentoring on the career success of both parties. Not only is the mentee given the benefit of guidance, but the mentor also benefits from the process of exerting influence and imparting wisdom.

Ramona advocated mentoring on an informal level. She described how it was useful for women new to the organization to get together socially to ask questions and learn from the more experienced women.

Stella recommended mentoring people and being role models to them. She enjoyed mentoring women and seeing them promote. Being cautious about not aligning herself with her gender or defining herself in gender-related ways, Stella emphasized that she also mentored men and described no real differences in the experiences.

### *Commitment*

Five of the nine participants discussed various elements of commitment. Some of them used other terms such as perseverance or sacrifice. Some spoke of seeking out opportunities. But the general thrust of each of the comments presented in this section seemed to indicate that success in law enforcement requires a need for what is generally described as commitment.

Evelyn drew attention to the pressures that are placed on women in law enforcement to succeed. She stressed that women should be committed to their success in order to “tolerate the incredible pressures” they will face.

Naila stressed the importance of perseverance, pointing out that obstacles to success will always exist and need to be handled. She noted that an individual needs to make the decision as to whether or not a challenge is worth the “personal toll” it takes, and if it is, then one must do what is required to overcome the barrier. She pointed out that having a career in law enforcement can be very demanding and requires making a lot of personal sacrifices.

Quinn strongly encouraged women to “seek out opportunities” in order to advance professionally. She cautioned against expecting opportunities to come to a person, but urged women to be “proactive” in finding ways to get ahead.

Ramona encouraged women to be “tenacious” about their careers in law enforcement. She considered moving up the ladder in law enforcement to be “worth the fight” that it would entail.

Stella said that in law enforcement, it is important to be “fully committed” to one’s job in order to move up the ladder to success. She explained the difference between

doing a “satisfactory” job versus showing the kind of competitiveness and involvement that gets one to the top. Stella made clear that much time and energy must be committed in order to succeed in this profession.

### *Job Competence*

Five of the nine participants discussed the importance of doing a job well. Not only performing at a highly proficient level of competence, but also having a variety or wide range of experience was described as necessary to succeed in their profession. Many times the women spoke of the importance of job competence as it related to obtaining and keeping the support of others, the absence of which they had described as a major obstacle to success.

Evelyn underscored the importance of having a broad range of experience in law enforcement by describing her own exceptional background. She explained that she had a very desirable background for promotion to the chief position because she has “worked so many different assignments.”

Naila supported the idea that women in law enforcement need to be serious about their work and demonstrate their competence on the job. She stressed the importance in law enforcement of scoring high on promotional tests.

Prudence emphasized performing well on the job in order to move upwards. In her opinion, this is probably the most important thing that a woman can do to succeed. In a no-nonsense directive, she advised: “Just get in, do your job, and do it well.”

Prudence also discussed the expectations that women should have concerning the choices they make in life. While conceding that some women may choose to make decisions that allow them more space or time to devote to personal commitments, she

made clear that they should realize that such decisions will impact their career advancement opportunities. This is true because not only the men, but also many of the other women, will be taking advantage of every opportunity to prepare for promotions.

Stella found it valuable to work hard and to do a good job at the tasks she undertook. She did well on all the exams and earned promotions at every possible step. She believed that her accomplishments served to benefit her by providing numerous growth opportunities.

Winifred's notion of job competence included the progression through all the requisite steps without "taking any shortcuts to the top." She explained that in law enforcement, it is important to work in certain areas in order to demonstrate readiness to lead. Winifred detailed how a woman could get sidetracked from the road to success by actually moving upwards too quickly without going through all the important areas of the job. She pointed out that in the long-term, an early promotion may work to a woman's disadvantage, or an attractive assignment may best be avoided. Winifred maintained that working competently in all the departments for the requisite time is required for ultimate career success.

### *Education*

Four of the nine participants reported that education is very important for career advancement in law enforcement. Each of the participants had at least a bachelor's degree, but the four who specifically mentioned education had some type of graduate education as well.



Naila called education “the great equalizer.” She considered it essential to a law enforcement leadership career. Because of the changes that occur so frequently in law enforcement, she believed that education is important to simply “keep up.”

Prudence maintained that education is a “must” for women in law enforcement. She advised women to take advantage of educational opportunities even though it may be difficult to do because of personal commitments. She had found difficulty balancing career and family along with going to school, but felt that it was worth the struggle in the long run.

Stella clarified the importance of education, and drew a connection between it and commitment. She articulated her opinions on the importance of education to achieving leadership positions. Tying in the importance of commitment to that of education, she remarked that one must be prepared to make the commitment to get their education in order to succeed.

Winifred advised women to learn and to be knowledgeable about changes. She advocated becoming degreed, but additionally she focused on the more general idea of “preparation” and “learning.” Winifred saw the need to learn as a continual process due to the “changing nature of leadership.”

### *Reputation*

Three of the nine participants conveyed the importance that they placed on earning and maintaining a good reputation. In order to prevent the tarnishing of one’s reputation, they revealed the need to protect a reputation. In many ways, they spoke of the sexual politics and rumors about sexual trysts that exist in the law enforcement field.

Evelyn warned women to be on guard to protect their reputation in more than one sense. On the one hand, she felt that women “need to be alert” because men are going to be attempting to find errors to blame on them. On the other hand, she spoke of guarding one’s reputation in the more usual sense of guarding against rumors of infidelity. In many instances, Evelyn was warning that a woman’s success would be attributed to “who she was sleeping with.” It was this sexual aspect of reputation that was also of concern to some of the other participants.

Prudence also was disturbed concerning the existence of rumors of sexual relationships. She was aware of many instances where the promotions that women received had been attributed to their having affairs with men. She pointed out that such rumors have a negative impact on the career advancement of women in law enforcement.

Ramona thought a woman’s reputation is important in a law enforcement agency. While one’s actions are more easily observed and discussed in a small organization, she noted that keeping a good reputation is even important in a large one such as that in which she worked.

#### *Work/Life Balance*

Only two of the nine participants spoke of the need to maintain a healthy balance in life and to have major support systems that are outside of the organization. And yet the two who did mention its importance stressed how much it had helped them to have a healthy balance between their home and work lives. Both of the participants described various aspects of this vital integration.

Lola found support from her family as she dealt with the struggles of her demotion and attempts to clear her name. She felt that her family “would always be there

for her,” and that provided her much solace. Additionally, she had ties to her ethnic community which gave her much needed support.

Winifred considered it her most important piece of advice when she suggested that women have outside interests and develop friends outside of law enforcement. She pointed out that one can get “consumed” by the law enforcement culture and must have other interests in order to achieve a balance in life.

#### *Summary of First Group of Advancement Strategies*

The most frequently mentioned advancement strategy was mentoring. That strategy was acknowledged by seven participants. Five participants referred to commitment and job competence as important strategies for getting to the top in law enforcement. Four of the women specified education as important, and three spoke of the need to have a good reputation. Two of the participants indicated their recognition of a healthy work/life balance in creating successful careers for themselves.

### Discussion

#### *Bulletproof Leadership Qualities*

Other strategies extracted from the data appeared different from the ones in the prior section in that they pertain more to personal qualities of success. For this reason, they are grouped and integrated into a concept of leadership termed “Bulletproof Leadership.” This second group of advancement strategies are presented and discussed in more detail below.

One of the most striking findings that was consistently found throughout all of the interviews was the very strong and resilient personal nature showed by these participants.

This important underlying value forms the basis for development of the idea of “Bulletproof Leadership.” Another clear observation was that some women in law enforcement engaged in denial of their victimization. The indications of this are explored. The type of qualities produced through bulletproof leadership allow for effective advancement strategies in overcoming barriers are discussed. Lastly, in this section, the information from the supplementary interviews are included in the analysis.

All of the nine participants were adamant about the importance of effective leadership and articulated their ideas on the ingredients of good leadership. It was easily noticed that what the participants shared was that most of their leadership actions centered on a positive and confident attitude, and yet there were other related elements that were apparent and important in order to flesh out the full perspective on their ways of leading.

Combining the participants’ expressed viewpoints on the subject with other comments they made concerning their feelings and how they had responded in various situations, a picture of what makes a good leader begins to emerge. Adding in some observations about ways in which the participants demonstrated exceptional leadership attributes in very similar ways to each other led to a clear depiction of some effective leadership principles.

These principles seem particularly useful in explaining how successful women overcome obstacles to success. When combined, these principles may aptly be described as a kind of “Bulletproof Leadership,” a term created through this research to draw together information gleaned from the data concerning the most effective aspects of the similar ways these participants found for “fighting back” in their efforts to reach the top.

“Bulletproof Leadership” can be described as the type of leadership that is characterized by extreme confidence and indisputable assurance that is balanced by awareness and acceptance of the political climate in which they operated. This type of leadership overcomes obstructions to successful goal accomplishment by conquering such impediments through a type of robust spirit and zeal that provide potentiality for ferreting out foolproof solutions to satisfy the intentions that they resolutely pursue.

Informal definitions of “bulletproof” include “safe from failure” (Random House Unabridged Dictionary, 2006), and “impervious to assault, damage or failure” (American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 2000). Used in computing terminology, “bulletproof” refers to a state “capable of correctly recovering from any imaginable exception condition” and is considered “extremely robust” (Free On-Line Dictionary of Computing, 1993-2005). Synonyms for “bulletproof” are “unassailable” or “unshakable” (WordNet, 2003) and “impenetrable” or “invincible” (Roget’s New Millennium Thesaurus, 2006).

As noted, the term “bulletproof” is used in the computing field to indicate a design that offers foolproof solutions (Cederholm, 2005). The term is used in the political literature to describe making one’s own way (Jones, 1997) or to refer to indestructible qualities (Buckley, 2006). “Bulletproof” is a term used in Asian film and literature to depict the extraordinary powers of a Tibetan super-hero (Lewis, Jones, Oeming, 2002). In Christian literature, the term has described Christian believers with enormous confidence, driving purpose, and lack of fear (Holton, 2005).

In the literature on leadership, the term “bulletproof” should be similarly useful to depict effective leadership resulting from these same qualities. The actions of these

remarkable women evoked images of resilient perseverance that empowers and promotes the potential for overcoming barriers and relentlessly pursuing goals with invisible armor that indeed made these women seem “bulletproof.”

A full understanding of how “Bulletproof Leadership” is displayed can be systematically achieved by examining each of the elements of leadership as exhibited or advocated by the participants. These leadership elements were studied and then combined into a coherent set of leadership principles. These elements are listed below and attributed to each remarkable leader who expressed them through their advice or described actions. They are listed in an order that allows their interrelationships to be shown, and can be found in Table 6.1.

#### *Let Others Judge You*

It is first of all important to gain knowledge about the nature of the obstacles that you face. Hazel recognized the importance of knowing what others think of you in order to proceed wisely. You need to know how you are perceived by others. What you choose to do with that information is within your control, but first you need to have awareness. You must be aware of the truth about how you are viewed in the organization. If you cannot be open enough to elicit this feedback and receive it without being defensive, have a trusted source within the organization act as your direct pipeline and informant. But do not surround yourself with “yes” people who will shield you from the truth.

#### *Withstand Pressure*

Hazel learned a valuable lesson that in her particular situation concerned the media or press, but that could be extrapolated to all outside sources that do not have any direct impact on your career success. Hazel found that “bad press doesn’t last long.”

Table 6.1

*Qualities of bulletproof leadership*

Qualities	How to Display These Qualities
Let Others Judge You	Gain the information to know when to change or take action
Withstand Pressure	Change when it is necessary and withstand external pressure when it won't affect you
Know When to Leave	Move on to another assignment or organization when it will help you advance
Focus on Your Successes	Define yourself as a winner based upon what you have already done
Forgive and Forget	Let go of bad feelings that relate to the past
Garner Support	Support can be achieved only through winning the trust and respect of others
Ask for Help and Take It	Receive help from others because it only increases your own strength
Learn from Mistakes And Criticisms	Mistakes and criticism are expected side effects of growth
Be a Decision-Maker	Strength and self-sufficiency make strong decision-makers
Be Confident and Positive	True belief in yourself insulates you

“Press” can be defined in a generic sense to include gossip and rumors and other types of innuendo that are made by people who don’t have a direct or last influence on your career. If you believe that you are doing the right thing, just “wait out” any negative reactions until they subside.

The important distinctions to keep in mind between this point and the prior one on receiving feedback is whether or not the information is true, whether or not you believe you are right, and whether these are opinions held by those in your organization. It is necessary to know the reality of how others perceive you and to solicit and accept feedback, but not to be negatively impacted by opinions or comments that you do not feel are accurate or that do not require change on your part. If there is nothing that you feel you should do differently, just withstand the outside pressure, because it will taper and recede eventually.

#### *Know When to Leave*

By being in tune with the political climate, one is also more likely to know when that point comes where one should shift gears and move to a different department or even a different organization. Changing assignments or jobs may be necessary in order to get to the level that you aspire to reach. It is also sometimes useful to have experience that only is obtainable through a diversity of job experiences. Hazel, for instance, knew not to get too comfortable in a job. Be ready to follow the best route upwards in your field and be open to the political situation, able to recognize when it is time to move on.

#### *Focus on Your Successes*

Be proud of the accomplishments that you have already made no matter what you aspire to become. Naila aspired to be chief and continually attempted to reach that goal,



but never stopped focusing on the many things that she had already accomplished. Let the next step be a challenge, but not one that defines your success. Dwell on the progress that you have already made and try to repeat the practices that worked for you in getting to the point you have already reached. Take time to enjoy what you have earned and feel good about yourself.

### *Forgive and Forget*

Moving ahead cannot easily be accomplished if you are held back by bitterness or harbor ill-will for past harm that you may have experienced. Naila adhered to the philosophy that you cannot be affected by what others have done to you. If you do let it affect you, it will only make you the loser. Let the anger and hurt go and know that what others did to you in the past does not have to impact who you are.

### *Garner Support through Respect and Trust*

The three issues of support, respect and trust are interrelated. Generally one needs another person's respect in order to gain their trust. And having their support is unlikely if they do not respect or trust you. It is vital for a leader to be supported by not only the people who report to them, but by their colleagues and their supervisors. Gathering support from these groups requires earning their respect and trust.

Prudence and Hazel emphasized the importance of truly caring about your subordinates as basic to earning their trust. Prudence indicated this is one of the leadership traits that may be easier for women due to their socialized maternal natures. But however trust is earned, the participants generally found it important.

Evelyn recognized that regardless of the consequences, you will not get respect if you are not yourself. And if you succeed as someone else, it isn't genuine, so it doesn't

count! Maintain your identity first of all; whatever follows from that is a secondary benefit. You will not receive the necessary trust and respect if you are “disingenuous.”

Prudence defined respect in a very direct way to the point of confronting her adversaries and demanding it. Depending on the situation, the request for respect can be implied or subtle, or it may need to be more overt. But it must always be clear that you expect and demand respect and will not tolerate anything less. The element of directness and no third-party intermediaries are vital in establishing the interpersonal connections that are necessary for achieving support through winning respect and trust.

Establish your power position directly and without reliance on others. Do this in whatever way you, yourself, can most effectively accomplish it. The manner in which you go about gaining these important ties to others provides a perfect opportunity for revealing your true identity to them.

Prudence also advised that gaining your colleague’s trust makes you a “go-to person.” Once you have become respected in this way, you can establish your credibility. Prudence also told us that making a “mark” is important in establishing recognition as a leader. And this can easily be done by the following three steps: (a) get people to trust and believe in you, (b) excel in something specific no matter how simple it may be, (c) leave your imprint by making some positive contribution that will be attributed to you.

#### *Ask for Help and Take It*

It is not a sign of weakness to obtain needed assistance. Prudence explained that many instances of leadership failures are unnecessary and happen because people don’t utilize the resources available to them. They are afraid to ask for help or they don’t take

advantage of help when it is offered. Continuous upward career movement in an organization requires utilizing the resources available.

Winifred linked the process of learning not just through formal education but to seeking and receiving guidance from esteemed people in your organization. Winifred warned against being afraid to ask people for help. Receiving the knowledge that other people have only increases your own knowledge base.

### *Learn from Mistakes and Criticism*

Stella advocated that people “learn from your own mistakes.” She added to this the idea of learning from the mistakes of others. You can do this by watching other people to see what works for them and what doesn’t, seeing when they stumble and analyzing why it happened and how it could have been avoided. You can also improve your own leadership by acquiring indirect coaching through the reading of biographies of famous leaders. This is a great way to analyze mistakes and failures as well as obtain detailed understanding of how great people have reached success. Adapt their experiences to your own situation.

Hazel soon realized that she could receive invaluable “self-tutelage” from simple, human missteps, the ones that average people are afraid to make. She told us that over-confidence prevents you from being conscious of the criticisms that might result from the invaluable lessons learned through making mistakes. Be confident, but not to the point of ignoring valuable information about yourself. Learn not only to accept criticism, but also to seek it out. It is a valuable learning tool that will help propel you to the next level.

Hazel advised using trial and error as you chart new territory and move into areas where you have not worked before. There is no other way to “make your mark” and do

the job in your own way. Know that everyone has made mistakes, and don't fear doing so yourself. Expect the criticisms that will result from the mistakes that are bound to occur as you forge ahead. Learn to embrace criticisms as a tool to use to your own advantage.

### *Be a Decision-Maker*

One reason that it is important that you not be afraid of criticism is because it can inhibit your abilities as a strong decision-maker. Decision-making is a vital task for a leader. Winifred informed us of the need to be a "strong decision-maker" and also in that regard to be "self-sufficient." Nobody will make the difficult decisions for you, and you are better off if you do not rely on anyone to make them for you.

Stella said that leaders should be willing to make decisions, even if they are difficult ones. Don't be reluctant to make decisions because of fear of criticism. Realize up front that when you make a decision, some people will approve, and some people will not. But most people won't notice or care either way if it doesn't directly affect them. So just do what you think is right and don't worry about the consequences.

Evelyn maintained that a strong sense of self or strong personality or ego is important for leadership success. Even though you may be described by others as too hard or strong as she was in many instances, consider this feedback as a compliment and an indication that you are on the road to success. Remember that there are others who are more successful than you because they are even stronger.

### *Be Confident and Positive*

It is possible to survive the onslaught of incredible opposition by adhering to the simple edict to "believe in yourself." Lola believed in her abilities to do her job and relied on her many loyal supporters. Only those who shared her confidence in her abilities were

allowed to have any influence upon her feelings about herself. Anyone who cast doubt on her leadership was excluded from her thoughts. Allow yourself to be affected only by the attitudes that are expressed by those who may be bringing you truthful and useful information about needed changes in your actions or beliefs. Only take the feedback of trusted and loyal sources. Do not give heed to those who create negative thoughts without reason.

Ramona said to “keep your head high” when people say negative things about you. She warned that when people “throw mud at you,” it is still possible to overcome it by just being confident. Ramona cautioned against being discouraged when it appears that you are not making progress. She thought that women and minorities should not view setbacks as instances of discrimination, but should think of them as mere obstacles. Do not become disheartened. Work on improving or changing whatever is keeping you down.

Hazel mentioned the use of yoga techniques in developing skillful mental habits for letting go of the resistance that may accompany efforts to go along with requirements or policies that you must adhere to, but may not find easy to accept or implement. She found this necessary in accepting concepts or ideas that were initially foreign to her and required the learning of acceptance. If it is necessary to embrace new or alien ideas, you may find it useful to employ mental techniques in learning adaptability measures to increase your openness. This is vital to allow you to continue forward progression in your career.

Stella agreed with this idea in her endorsement of “insulating” oneself from attacks. She thought it essential that one not focus on “bad experiences” because it can

create “negativity.” Do not become bitter about the struggles you encounter, but try to grasp the opportunities that are there. Stella knew that it is necessary to be focused on the positive.

Stella admitted that there are “people who don’t like the things that I do, or don’t like me or my management style.” But she said that it doesn’t bother her. She doesn’t find it important because she does what she thinks is the right thing, and then doesn’t worry about what other people think.

Stella made it clear that being “tough” is called for if you want to rise to the top. It is not that you truly do not care what people think about you, but it should not be something that you focus on. To be truly confident is to believe in yourself more than in others.

Prudence summed up the importance of having a positive outlook through her contention that if some undesirable plight is unchangeable, it is more productive to find the good aspects of the situation and focus on those. Be creative and find a way to make a problem turn into an asset.

Evelyn gave a final word of advice to those facing extreme situations requiring mental “survival mechanisms.” She used the phrase “push it to the back” meaning to not think about the difficulties encountered in order to put oneself in the mindset to push forward and survive as a leader.

The notion of confidence and positivism in your outlook is the cornerstone principle of “Bulletproof Leadership.” The women who displayed this type of winning attitude stepped forward with their positive attitude over and over again in the face of obstacles and barriers that would be found daunting to most. The remarkable bravery and

strength that they displayed as others attempted to keep them down is the essential element of the invincible leaders who show no fear and rebound from adversity with robust character to find foolproof solutions to the purposes that drive them.

Some may ask whether “Bulletproof Leadership” is effective for men as well as women, as it was developed solely from interviews with women leaders. Because these lessons were learned from interviews with women in a male-dominated field, they should be valuable to men as well. Women have used the leadership lessons gleaned from men for many years, so it is logical that the advice from women leaders now be considered valuable to men in the law enforcement workplace.

### *Barriers and Relevant Advancement Strategies*

By analyzing the barriers and strategies for advancement that were either utilized or suggested by the participants, methods for overcoming each barrier can be suggested. More than one strategy could be useful in conquering each barrier, but for display purposes only one strategy is delineated for each barrier. A listing of the barriers found to prohibit equal advancement opportunities along with a corresponding offering of suggested response strategies can be found in Table 6.2. They are listed in order of frequency of mention by the participants.

One possible strategy for handling the “double standard” that women face in being measured by stricter standards is to remain focused on career goals and have a high degree of commitment. Some of the most successful women seemed to be pushed forward by the challenge of being measured more strictly. Ramona fought for the necessary training that was being denied women, and would not have advanced to where she is if she had not demanded the training opportunities.

Table 6.2

*Strategies for overcoming barriers to equal advancement*

Barriers	Related Advancement Strategy
Double Standard	Commitment
Disloyalty: Lack of Trust & Support	Bulletproof Leadership
Old Boys Club	Reputation
Personal Traits: Appearance & Personality	Job Competence
Queen Bee & Other Women	Mentoring
Race: The Double Whammy	Work/Life Balance
Recruitment Procedures	Education



Overcoming the problems of disloyalty and concomitant lack of trust and support can be accomplished through the principles of “Bulletproof Leadership.” Forging ahead with confidence and assurance may help create the trust and loyalty that is needed for success. Every one of the women in this study did so.

Guarding your reputation closely is one way to protect yourself from the dangers of the “Old Boys Club.” Another way is through alignment with women’s groups and developing networking and mentoring relationships.

Excelling in job performance with high levels of competence can help overcome the threats to success that may result from appearance and personality traits. Also, knowing that others have similar challenges should be helpful in developing useful alliances. Women could be helpful to each other if they recognized that all shared the same conflict, but handled it in different ways.

What Garcia (2003) termed “doing gender” is a problem faced by all women in policing whether they attempt to respond to the conflict by acting masculine or by displaying their feminine side. She noted that women are criticized either way they play it: “If a woman acts too feminine, she is criticized for not being suitable for the job. However, if she acts too masculine, she is criticized for not acting like a woman” (p. 341).

The Queen Bee and similar damage done by other women can possibly be reduced through effective mentoring on either a formal or informal level. Making friends with the “queen bee” and thereby reducing the threat as Naila did could be beneficial in some instances.

The hurt inflicted by racial barriers may be somewhat lessened through the help of family and friends if one has an equilibrium in life through proper balance of work and home or social life. Both Lola and Ramona relied on family and friends as major support mechanisms.

Improper recruitment procedures can be counteracted with knowledge of the legal and professional expectations for proper selection of candidates. Naila and Prudence knew when to question the methods being used and found instances where competing for a promotion was not in their best interests.

### *Victimization Denial*

Symptoms of victimization include blaming oneself and denial of the act. Many times victims of discrimination engage in denial of the existence of the problem. Denial is recognized as a reaction to posttraumatic stress, and it has been found to be a common symptom of gender-related discrimination (Morash, 2005). The existence of denial as an effect of victimization was found to be true in this research.

It appeared that some women were found to have engaged in denial of the mistreatment or discrimination that they experienced in attempting to succeed as law enforcement leaders. The concept of denial is not uncommon in situations of victimization because victims sometimes find it easier to blame themselves or to fail to face the reality of the situation. Victimization carries with it an association with feelings of powerlessness and vulnerability, feelings that women attempting to succeed in male-dominated fields have sometimes found a need to hide or avoid.

Evelyn had grown beyond the point of denial at the time she was interviewed, but she initiated a discussion concerning how she had at one time denied the discriminatory

nature of some of the actions that were displayed towards her. The suggestive valentine upon her promotion, the refusal to acknowledge her authority because of her gender, the dead animals placed on her car, all were admittedly at one time justified in her mind in an attempt to deny the discrimination she was encountering. It was only when she reached the upper executive levels that Evelyn realized that she must face the truth of the meanings behind the actions in order to overcome the gender discrimination they represented.

Hazel seemed to be in denial at some points in her very rosy description of her career experiences. Few instances of gender-related discrimination were dwelt on by her, although it was known from other sources that she had encountered discrimination during her career. One example of her refusal to speak in terms of gender discrimination was the instance where she lost out on a job to a male she admitted was less qualified than her, and yet she chalked up his selection over her to the excuse that she had not performed well in the interview.

Lola spoke of the denial that some women engage in while attempting to ignore gender discrimination. She bluntly asserted that women at the upper levels of an organization who say they have not experienced discrimination are simply not being truthful.

Stella herself seemed to be engaging in denial that she had experienced any gender-related struggles as she reflected upon her career. For one thing, she made a point of saying that the struggles she had encountered were not gender-related, and then proceeded to describe the difficulties of being a single mother of three children attempting to advance in her career, clearly a gender-related issue.

At some points in the interview, Stella was adamant to the point of defiance in her refusal to see gender discrimination in her career. She spoke at length about her feelings that she had not experienced gender discrimination, although analysis of her career at the EPP would tell one otherwise. Stella worked in an organization where the “Old Boys Club” was so entrenched that she was aware it even had a name and had been under investigation because it is known that she was a supervisor at the EPP when a well-known group was being investigated. So for her to then dismissively express that “men will be men” indicates substantial denial of the discrimination the male opposition indicated.

Winifred showed less extreme but similar denial by her refusal to accept that anything “as sinister” as the “Old Boys Club” existed, and yet described its characteristics to a tee in describing this network in her organization. This mentality of denial is important because it allows the gender barriers to exist and flourish. As Evelyn had pointed out, only by recognizing such opposition can it then be overcome.

*Perspectives from the Supplementary Interviews of Six Male Police Chiefs*

The data provided by the interviews with the male chiefs is useful in various respects. It helps to flesh out the data provided by women by providing a point of contrast to that of those participants. It also allows for the integration of additional perspectives on some of the topics that the primary participants elaborated upon. The viewpoints of the male chiefs will be presented concerning three areas: their views about women in top leadership positions, their advice to women who attempt to progress to high positions, and their perspectives on what the future holds for women at the top.

*Views About Women in Top Leadership Positions*

Chief Eaton pointed out that since women have only been represented in large numbers in law enforcement for approximately 25 years, they are just now to the point where they are poised to assume the top leadership spots. He professed his belief that women have the types of skills that are now considered more important than such factors as physical size. While insisting that women have not been discriminated against in his organization and face no barriers to advancement, Chief Eaton heads the organization where Evelyn and Stella lost when in competition with him and were later forced out.

Chief Ives expressed his beliefs that having women as chief is “natural.” He also said that it is beneficial for society to have women serving in this capacity. Yet, a woman has not yet made chief of the organization which he heads, and in fact a highly qualified woman had lost out in competition there.

Chief Jones was under the impression that women occupy 30 percent of the top positions in business in the United States. Yet, the true statistic is that only 16.4 percent of all vice presidents and presidents of Fortune 500 jobs are held by women (Catalyst, 2006, p. 5).

Chief Jones implied that the situation is the same for women in law enforcement as it is for women in business, and he is close on that assumption, although the actual numbers are much lower than he seems to believe. We know that the number is closer to 2 percent than 30 percent in business if we are looking only at Fortune 500 CEO positions (Catalyst, 2006, p. 5). In law enforcement, we saw that only slightly over 1 percent of chiefs are women (Goldston, 2006). The comparisons between law

enforcement and business will be discussed in the Implications section of this chapter when parallels are drawn to the business world.

Chief Lacy described the more inclusive type of leadership that women are thought to exhibit and expressed his positive thoughts on it. While refusing the use of the term “double standard,” he described the fact that women are more closely watched and more easily criticized than those of men. He may have concluded this from the demotion received by the top woman in his organization, a woman who has a pending lawsuit alleging that she was treated worse than her male colleagues who were involved in the same scandal.

Chief Vance felt that women, or “ladies” as he referred to them, have been given equal advancement opportunities in the VPD, an organization where it is known that women have been demoted and have even filed lawsuits alleging gender discrimination. These women took early retirement because of their inability to reach the top. The only remaining top woman in the organization has also made the decision to take early retirement rather than compete for the chief position when next available. Chief Vance offered his opinion that women are “too aggressive” and are unsuccessful in moving up because they are not “waiting their turn” for chief.

Chief Williams clearly felt that women are qualified for top level positions. He undeniably had established systems for both recruiting and promoting women and minorities in fully integrated ways. He alluded to the resistance that men generally had to these policies, but he pointed out the value of establishing objective promotional policies in terms of overcoming their objections. He had established a model organization and was praised by the top woman who had promoted through the organization.

*Advice to Women*

Chief Eaton shied away from providing advice specifically targeted to the successful development of women leaders in law enforcement. He responded to questioning by qualifying his advice to be what he would provide to either a man or woman. The advice he offered was that individuals desiring to advance to law enforcement leadership positions should “work hard.”

Chief Ives advised women to be prepared. He pointed out that it is only through complete and thorough preparation that women be able to take advantage of opportunities to move up to the next level.

Chief Jones emphasized that women should not only get their education, but to obtain a broad range of experience and to gain the respect of their person. He also mentioned the importance of having goals and actively competing to achieve them.

Chief Lacy thought that it would be advisable for women to maintain a good reputation, to get their education, and to work hard. He implied that a woman should develop a reputation for being a hard worker, for being a team player, and for being concerned about the good of the organization.

Chief Vance advised women to get experience in a wide range of areas and to make certain their experience encompasses jobs that are valuable to their promotion rather than focusing on “easy” or “fun” areas. In addition, he was of the opinion that it is important to work in several different agencies in order to get a chief’s job.

*Perspectives on the Future for Women Leaders in Law Enforcement*

Chief Eaton was generally optimistic about the future opportunities for women to lead law enforcement organizations. However, he did agree that they are not yet equally

represented, particularly at the top levels. He aptly described the movement of women to the top as a “work in progress.”

Chief Ives said that the number of women in key leadership positions is increasing “tremendously” although maybe “not to the degree that some would like to see.” He speculated that the reason there are not more women at the top is because of the few number of women in law enforcement overall. He thought this may be due to the nature of law enforcement itself and its physical challenges.

Chief Jones opined that many people don’t want to be managers, suggesting that to be the reason that women are not equally represented in the top ranks. He did express his feelings that more women are becoming competitive for the chief’s spot and that women are gradually being accepted by the community as well as by male officers.

Chief Vance expressed optimism for the future for women advancing to top spots in law enforcement agencies. However, he qualified this by his emphasis on the factors of recruitment of women and of women gaining well-rounded policing experience.

Chief Williams seemed positive about the future for women in law enforcement leadership. He felt that there would be more women in law enforcement if it were not perceived in gender-biased ways as a job more appropriate for the males. He expressed his feelings that the public will be better served if women are among its leadership. He alone of all the chiefs interviewed gave responsibility for the equal advancement of women to the organization itself, charging existing executives to clear a path to success that is free of discrimination.



*Summary of the Male Chiefs' Perspectives*

Conclusions from analysis of the interviews of the male chiefs can be contrasted to the interviews of the primary participants. In some respects, this can be viewed as a contrast between the male and female voices. Such comparisons provide the following similarities and differences:

1. The male chiefs conveyed for the most part a different view of the women's representation in the upper levels of law enforcement than is true. They generally believe or implied that women are more equally represented at the top than the facts indicate. Additionally, they did not seem aware of the amount of discrimination that exists for women attempting to move into chief positions. The exception to this was Chief Williams, who built a model organization because of his grasp of the truth.
2. The male chiefs provided fewer items of advice, yet the advice the males offered was generally similar to advice that was provided by the women who were the primary participants. The suggestions provided by the male chiefs was often similar to the suggestions the women offered, but less extensive. Taken together, the male chiefs advocated the following avenues to success, all of which were also suggested by the women participants: preparation, education, hard work, respect, and varied experience.
3. The male chiefs portrayed a rosier picture of the future for women in law enforcement than did the women. It is not clear why their beliefs are different from those of the women. However, with the one exception of Chief Williams, the men were not troubled about the barriers that women face in

advancing. Yet the women expressed some negative thoughts about whether these barriers can be sufficiently overcome to significantly change the footing that women have in law enforcement leadership.

The contrast between the positive perspectives shown by the male chiefs in describing the equal opportunities that the women have and the statistics on the progress they have actually made, is troubling. A point that was made by at least one of the participants is the necessity to acknowledge the truth of discrimination in order to overcome it. Consulting firms have noted that barriers to opportunities for success for business women exist in part because “cultural immunity to change is especially difficult for women being denied promotions when the leaders of the company don’t realize they are doing it” (CoachThee.com, 2006).

*Perspectives from the Supplementary Interviews of the Two Women*

Although Valerie was at a lower organizational position than the primary participants, and Chief Skoog is at a higher level, the perspectives indicated by both of these individuals were consistent with those of the primary participants. Valerie spoke of the same gender-related struggles in advancing as did the primary participants.

Interestingly, both Valerie and Chief Skoog noted that many young women coming up in the ranks of law enforcement are shying away from high level promotions. Valerie thought that this is because of the impact on their personal lives. Chief Skoog stated that her information from speaking with women officers was the same. Both Valerie and Chief Skoog shared the same concerns about the impact this trend would have on the future of women police leaders.

## Implications

### *The Future for Women Leaders in Law Enforcement*

In many respects the primary participants expressed doubts and suspicions about the future for women in overcoming the obstacles to achieving the top level position in law enforcement. There was some twinkling of hope in the projections made by some of the women, but to varying degrees, they questioned the likelihood of the proportion of women in top level positions dramatically changing in the near future.

Evelyn was among the more hopeful of the group, and expressed optimism that the situation would improve over time. She envisioned a world where people, regardless of gender or race, would be recognized as equally effective, although possibly going about their work in different ways.

Naila was one of the more positive of the primary participants in discussing the future for women in law enforcement. She focused on the positive as she continually compared the state of things today in law enforcement to the situation of both minorities and women two decades ago. Admittedly, quite a bit has changed since that time.

Prudence similarly believed that women will fare better as they seek top positions in the future. She felt that is due to the fact that the competence of women in law enforcement is becoming more generally accepted.

Stella was characteristically positive in her ideas about future chances for women in law enforcement. She foresaw increasingly more women and minorities as chiefs. She referenced the devastating struggles that some women have had in promotion, but believed that overall more women will be seen in chief level spots.

Yet some of the others were more cautious in their appraisal. Hazel, so eternally optimistic, spoke about the future of women in law enforcement in ways that revealed she no longer expects to see women becoming chiefs in great numbers. The growth of women in leadership positions is not proportionate to the growth that she realizes is necessary for true equality.

Lola viewed the future for women with an eye to the state of affairs for women of color. She mentioned that the “concrete ceiling” for minority women is harder to break than the ceiling of glass holding down Anglo women. She observed that minority women will “chip” away at the concrete ceiling even while Anglo women are shattering the ceiling of glass. Lola felt that is true because minority women are held to an even higher standard than are Anglo women, and that the mistakes of minority women are held against them for a longer period of time.

Quinn felt that the remaining hurdles that women must overcome in order to advance may be fewer, but are still quite numerous. She thought that the growth of women chiefs would depend on the effectiveness of mentoring and the increased confidence of women. She observed that law enforcement is still male dominated and, as such, would not easily become gender equal.

Ramona indicated that women still are a long way from equality for top leaders in law enforcement. She joked about the types of advancement that women have made, but still found that women are far from a true state of gender equality.

#### *Drawing Parallels to the Business World*

Analysis of the disparity in top leadership opportunities that are available to women in the law enforcement field can be placed in context by examining the parallels

to the business industry in the United States. The underlying truths are identical. For American businesswomen, the situation is aptly stated as follows:

Three decades after droves of women started business careers, and at a time when fifty percent of all managers and professionals are female . . . . the glass ceiling remains unbroken (CoachThee.com, 2006, ¶ 3).

The glass ceiling remains unbroken in law enforcement as well, although not as much attention has been given to the gender discrimination that exists in that profession. Is it because of the assumption that women in law enforcement are of such strength that they do not face the same barriers as do their civilian counterparts, or that they can overcome these barriers more easily?

While top-notch research groups such as Catalyst (2006) conclude that women still face a glass ceiling in business careers, scant heed is paid to the similar plight of their sisters in law enforcement. Indeed, the law enforcement literature abounds with applause for the few women who have successfully climbed the ladder to chief, with sufficient fanfare to cloud the truth of the blatant and glaring discrimination that keeps so many qualified women from reaching the top rank. And many observers, including male chiefs who themselves have made it to the top, as well as some women themselves, mistake the few success stories for evidence of full equality and equal acceptance.

But the truth lies in the scant numbers that the reports show and in the experiences that the women lived. The truth is the same for the women who attempt to reach the top in law enforcement as it is for the women in business. The truth as stated by Catalyst is that rates of increase of women in corporate officer positions have slowed across the country to the point that “progress has almost come to a standstill” (Catalyst, 2006, p. 1).

Looking at the figures in law enforcement, the situation is similarly undeniable. Women have been working in law enforcement for well over three decades, easily enough years to get to the point where they could be in line for the top position. Women occupy about 200 of the approximately 18,000 chief spots in the country, that is about 1.1 percent of chief positions, and many of these women-occupied positions are at small agencies or college law enforcement. Only a handful of the chief positions in very large metropolitan area police departments are held by women, few enough that such an appointment is newsworthy. The high visibility of such appointments tends to give the impression even to those in law enforcement that there are more women in such positions than there actually are.

Although there are undeniably some remarkable women serving in chief positions after many hard years of working to reach that level, there are not as many chiefs as would be warranted considering the number of women in law enforcement and the amount of time that women have been working in the field. The figures are the same or even more dramatic than for women in business, an area where the situation of gender discrimination has been given more attention and is more widely documented. As the figures below will substantiate, only a handful of women have reached the top in either law enforcement or business careers.

A recent article in the Wall Street Journal makes the point for businesswomen. Mentioning several women who achieved CEO positions at major corporations, the article denotes these as “examples of how women in business are asserting power” in many ways (Hymowitz, 2006, p. 1). Yet, the result is that focusing on the major feats of the successful few masks the denial of the top titles to the many other deserving and

qualified women. As Hymowitz noted after citing examples of the tremendous strides that women have made in obtaining more and higher positions in business in recent years: “Still, the numerous individual achievements belie the fact that at big, established companies, women in recent years have made little progress breaking into senior ranks” (p. 1).

Pepsico recently promoted a woman to chief executive, making her the 11<sup>th</sup> woman to run a Fortune 500 company and the woman running the largest (Deutsch, 2006). Deborah Soon, Vice-President at Catalyst, was quoted as saying that women have not yet broken through the glass ceiling but “are certainly making cracks in it” (Deutsch, ¶ 8).

Hymowitz (2006) drew attention to the disparity that exists as one looks higher up in the organization:

The vast majority of women, who hold more than half of all management and professional jobs and have been in the pipeline for decades now, still are concentrated in entry-level and middle ranks. Last year, they held 16.4% of Fortune 500 corporate officer jobs – the titles of at least vice president and positions that require board approval – an increase of just 0.7% from 2002, according to the latest study of executive women by Catalyst, the New York research group. The survey also found women comprised just 6.4% of the top five earners among corporate officers, a 1.2 % rise in the same period. These are lower growth rates than Catalyst reported in prior surveys, done every three years over the past decade (p. 1).

Furthermore, if the vice president level is excluded from the numbers, the proportion of women drops substantially because less than two percent, specifically 1.6 percent, of all Fortune 500 CEO's are women (Catalyst, 2006, p. 5). The percentage of women at top level business positions are lower than what they should be considering the number of women in the pipeline (Hymowitz, p. 1).

The situation is the same or worse in law enforcement where women hold just over one percent of the top level spots. Also, the growth rates or increases of women are getting lower, not higher as one would expect if the pipeline is operating properly. Greater percentages of women should be in the top positions each year, even if the percentages are not large enough in proportion to the number of women in the profession. In law enforcement, the number of women occupying the office of the chief should be increasing unless problems such as gender discrimination prevent the natural patterns of growth.

And the situation for people of color is more disheartening. In business, "women of color – African-Americans, Hispanics and Asians – made far less progress. They held just 1.7% of corporate-officer positions in 2005, and were 1% of Fortune 500 top earners" (Hymowitz, 2006, p. 1). While there are not similar figures on race for women in law enforcement, the data suggest that women of color face even greater barriers to advancement in law enforcement, just as they encounter in the business world. As the glass ceiling for Anglo women remains unbroken, the "concrete ceiling" for women of color remains unchipped.

The conclusion about women in business reached by the President of Catalyst, Ilene Lang, is applicable to law enforcement: "Until the numbers at the top reflect the



numbers in middle and bottom, companies don't have gender diversity, or a meritocracy" (Hymowitz, 2006, p. 1). Such a system where progress or advancement is based upon individual abilities or achievement is a laudable goal for an organization. The "meritocracy myth" (McNamee and Miller, 2004) challenges the assumptions that this ideology of the American Dream truly exists. The results of the present research allow us to concur.

Explanations for the low number of female CEOs in large corporations have been explored. Some of the reasons that Oakley (2004) examined for more women not rising to the top were: lack of line experience, inadequate career opportunities, gender differences in style and socialization, gender-based stereotypes, the old boy network, and tokenism. Many of these factors are similar to the explanations that can be reached for women in law enforcement, as evidenced by the data from this research on women competing for chief positions. For example, some of the primary participants, as well as Chief Vance, noted the importance of having a broad background of assignments.

One of the pieces of advice given to businesswomen by CEO's is to avoid dead-end jobs which don't give the responsibility that women need to vie for corporate positions (Hymowitz, p. 2). This is in line with the learned experiences and advice offered to women by those interviewed in this research. Several individuals advised that women aspiring for the chief position obtain a wide breadth of experience in the important jobs or departments in law enforcement.

According to the present research, it seems that women to a large extent have remained in certain areas in police departments that provide the schedules that more easily allow them to maintain their responsibilities at home. For example, according to

Prussel (2006), it appears that women may be tending to cluster in areas where other women are working and tend to avoid the jobs that are more difficult for women to get into such as SWAT, thereby leaving these as part of the remaining male bastion.

*Future Research Directions: The "Rubber Ceiling"*

An issue that frequently arose in the discussion of the future for women as law enforcement leaders was prospect of being doomed to immediate failure upon reaching the top. There appeared to be a number of instances where women have successfully broken through the glass ceiling only to encounter organizational or political obstacles that create failure resulting in their leaving the positions they fought so hard to attain.

This loss of a top leadership position after having reached it is a phenomenon that warrants further attention. For usefulness in discussing this concept, it will be referred to as the "rubber ceiling," a term that has been used only sporadically in the literature and for several different purposes (see Wooley & Peters, 1999; Kenyon, 2005; Heath, 2006; AllExperts, 2006).

The "rubber ceiling" analogy may be clarified through a description that was used for amplifier clipping. Imagine a ceiling padded with rubber where an object may slam into the rubber and gradually rest before pulling away, not suddenly stopped as though hitting glass or concrete. As applied in this writing, the "rubber ceiling" connotes the effect of an individual progressing to the top in her career position only to come to rest at that peak position momentarily before being pulled away and dropping down some distance.

Situations seem to exist where women leave the chief spot quickly after finally reaching that level. The question of why women suddenly leave their positions needs to

be addressed. With relatively few women in top leadership spots, it is important to determine why women encounter obstacles at the top sufficient to result in their leaving in short order. Some evidence may point to the fact that women do not leave the top positions voluntarily, but are forced out or possibly set up to fail due to the organizational culture that they are recruited into or due to the lack of trust and support they are accorded.

Some women who have headed small or not highly visible law enforcement agencies have left after short times due to the struggles they faced, even after reaching the top. Their situations have not been widely noted. A couple of examples are provided below.

One recent example of a woman who came under fire is Utah's first female chief, Theresa Garner, a veteran of more than 18 years with the South Salt Lake police force. Garner was dismissed by an incoming city mayor after four years as chief, leaving her "surprised" and shy of retirement eligibility. Her salary was reported to have been "somewhat less" than that of other local male police chiefs. The mayor's stated reason for dismissing Garner was merely that he felt she wasn't "all that enthused" about community policing. The mayor refused to keep her on the force in any capacity, preventing her from having retirement benefits. Garner was quoted as saying: "This creates a hardship for me. It's pretty coldhearted. It ruins my pension. I need 18 months to go for my retirement" (Smart, 2006, ¶ 1).

Another example is the case of Teresa Chambers, a law enforcement veteran of 28 years who became Chief of the National Park Service and was terminated with no reasons initially given. Later she was informed that she was fired because she had spoken out

about budget woes. She protested that she had come from outside of federal government and had not ever been made aware that since serving in a federal agency, she was not allowed to argue for adequate funding for protection of the nation's parks ("Ex-chief of Park Police denounces firing", 2004, ¶ 9). The firing of Chambers was questionable enough that a website entitled "Support Teresa Chambers" was established to generate support for her cause. Subsequent administrative charges were filed, some of which were dismissed, and Chambers went through an administrative process attempting to clear her name ("Support Teresa Chambers," 2004).

There are more widely known examples of women who were relieved of their service as chiefs of larger or more visible law enforcement agencies. Penny Harrington was the first woman chief of a large municipal police force, appointed chief of Portland in 1985. After facing personal and professional turmoil, she resigned the next year. She was referred to by the media as "tarnished" and her leadership was criticized as "defective" ("Portland Oregon's woman police chief quits," 1986, p. 17).

Two decades later, Kathleen O'Toole was appointed as the first female police commissioner in Boston in 2004, calling it her "dream job" after 25 years of service in law enforcement (Slack, 2006, ¶ 2). Following 27 months in Boston's top law enforcement spot, she was "stunned by the incredible turn of events that led to her departure" (Forry, 2006, ¶ 1). She attributed her hasty decision-making to the "media frenzy" concerning the events relating to her departure (Forry, 2006, ¶ 3). Not surprising to many, she left with "mixed emotions" (Slack 2006, ¶ 2).

From the "tarnished penny" to Kathleen O'Toole, the law enforcement profession abounds with two decades of stories of the women who made it to the top only to hit the

“rubber ceiling” and plummet to the bottom. They become criticized for practicing leadership that is subjected to intense scrutiny and then criticized with the benefit of hindsight. Women such as Harrington and O’Toole who headed some of the largest law enforcement agencies and left them for various stated reasons have been discussed widely in the media.

As discussed in the literature review found in Chapter II, Massachusetts recently had the unusual situation of women being appointed or elected for the first time to three of its most powerful law enforcement institutions: Police Commissioner Kathleen O’Toole in Boston, Sheriff Andrea Cabral in Suffolk County, and Commissioner Kathleen Dennehy of the Massachusetts Department of Corrections. Writing about this unusual situation of three women heading these organizations, McArdle (2004) noted that all three were brought into departments in the midst of upheaval and would face exceptionally challenging tasks which would be judged under close scrutiny and by which future women would be judged. She seemed to foresee the problems:

Coincidence? All three women were brought into departments in the midst of upheaval. Their performances will no doubt be watched closely and could ultimately be used against them if they should fail, just as their successes will help guide the women who follow them (§ 6).

It has been recognized that the pioneer women who were the first in their top positions have faced extra pressure from the microscopic examination they are given as they go about doing their jobs. In speaking of the difficulties faced and the impact made by the women who were the “firsts,” one of the pioneers herself noted:

They have paid a price for opening up doors for future women to pass through.

Some of these female pioneers advanced in policing while others did not survive in their careers. But they all helped break down barriers in large and small enforcement agencies at all levels of government” (Harrington and Lonsway, 2004, p. 507).

The barriers that women face in struggling to remain at the top should be examined because they are as important as the ones that women have faced in reaching the top. Research should be conducted into the reasons why women were appointed to the chief position and then thrust into extremely difficult circumstances, only to leave their posts shortly after their appointments. It would be worthwhile to investigate the phenomenon of women chiefs who hit the “rubber ceiling” shortly after their appointments, only to bounce back down.

Based upon the findings of this research, logical hypotheses for the lack of success of women law enforcement executives could be derived. It appears that women who reach the top positions in law enforcement generally do not have loyalty in terms of trust and support, do not have effective mentoring from other chiefs, face opposition of the “Old Boys Club,” are not supported by other women, and, for whatever reasons, are not practicing the “bulletproof leadership” that initially allowed them to reach the top position.

Some observations may be drawn from this research to provide initial ideas on how to approach the research of the impact of the “rubber ceiling.” In Evelyn’s experience, she did not feel accepted by her superiors and did not have the latitude to lead as she felt she should have. Naila left her organization at one point because of a

downward spiraling chain of events that resulted from her curt reply to an inappropriate comment. Prudence was reluctant to vie for chief in her organization because she conjectured that women may more generally face the potential for failure in top leadership roles due to the difficulty in obtaining vital support from male subordinates and colleagues who, she felt, may even try to create failure for women. Several women in this project, who were qualified for the top spot, retired early when they could have gone on to become chiefs of their organization.

There appears to be a turning point where women leaders lose the trust of their superiors, beginning a chain of events that results in their situation becoming so unbearable that they can no longer lead. This seemed true in at least three cases in this study, that of Evelyn, Lola, and Naila. Possibly the trust placed in women leaders by their superiors or by the community is more tenuous, fragile, and easily shaken than the trust placed in men.

Another possible accounting for the “rubber ceiling” is that women may not always have obtained the breadth of experience needed for top leadership spots. Quinn had mentioned that the lack of job experience in some needed areas may be reasons why women fail when they reach the top. This failing could be attributable to these assignments not being easily available to women as result of the “Old Boys Club” subculture or other gender-related issues.

Additionally, it may be that women unwittingly trap themselves by not recognizing the importance of working in some functional areas. Also, because of the extra responsibilities that women have placed on them in their social roles of wife and

mother, the women may gravitate toward areas with schedules more conducive to the dual roles of homemaker and career woman. Several participants spoke to this issue.

Winifred had warned that some areas may appear attractive because of the hours or assignments. But that does not mean they are the best for long-term advancement. Sometimes these opportunities should best be foregone if they prevent a woman from working jobs that she might be later criticized for not have worked.

Prudence mentioned that many women found the investigations area to meet their needs because of the regular hours and time off it provided, thus fitting in with their family responsibilities. She also noted that women were assigned to the juvenile division more than were men because of the assumption that women related well to children. The problem then becomes exacerbated because of the tendency for women to work in areas where other women work in order to have their support in the midst of the possible discrimination and rejection they face from male colleagues.

Several of the women had mentioned the lack of opportunity to work SWAT, an important assignment depending on the organization in which one attempts to become a leader. Considered as the "last male bastion," when its membership was restricted to bona fide tactical officers, it was found that the National Tactical Officers Association for SWAT officers could boast only 17 women among its 40,000 members (Prussel, 2001, p. 1).

While many may be under the impression that women are incapable of satisfactory performance on SWAT teams due to physical restrictions, this myth can be dispelled. SWAT positions have been obtained and effectively performed by women in their 40's and 50's, women who are grandmothers, women who wear size 4 clothing,



women no more than 4 feet tall, and women weighing slightly over 100 pounds (Prussel, 2001, p. 4). These women have disproved the assumption that women cannot serve on SWAT teams due to inadequate upper body strength, and they succeeded through diligent workouts and training (Prussel, 2001).

While SWAT is not necessarily required for shooting to the top, its denial to women is symbolic of the lack of recognition given to their equal standing in the field of law enforcement. And even though many women do not choose to attempt SWAT duty, the attitude that women are unable to do it denies the opportunity to the women who would choose it.

Mention had been made by some of the chiefs interviewed about the need for women to work in many functional areas such as finance that they do not generally go into. It would be useful to study which of the job assignments in law enforcement are found to provide the most valuable foundation for effective top leadership.

It could be that women become simply discouraged by the additional hardships that they encounter in a male-dominated field as they contend with a gender-biased network that makes maintaining their hard-earned success more difficult. The double standard is applicable all the way to the top. Chief Lynne Johnson was quoted as saying that women “still have to work harder and take more chances and risks” (Goldston, 2006, p. 2).

The “rubber ceiling” can be found to exist in other professional areas in addition to law enforcement. Recent research on barriers to success in the legal profession described the institutional structure of law firms being run on a business model that does not effectively address the “people side of management” (Rikleen, 2006).

Rikleen (2006) discovered the same blockage to success in the legal profession that is found to exist in business and law enforcement. She noted that only 17 percent of partners in the nation's law firms are women, while more than half of law school graduates have been women for over 20 years. Furthermore, she stressed the importance of what she termed the "retention problem" in law firms where many of those who leave are women. She also described the emotional abuse from men that women have encountered in law firms, the impact of the male subculture, and the Queen Bee Syndrome, all similar problems this study uncovered in law enforcement.

This problem of retaining women in top spots appears to exist across professional boundaries. The possible reasons for attrition should be examined and corrected, whether it be the lack of preparation through job assignments that women may have or the lack of support or trust that women receive from males at all levels in the organization, or other factors.

More attention should be given to how long women serve in top positions before leaving them and what the reasons are for their departure. Comparisons should be made between the number of women and men who leave top spots and how long they stay. The notion of a turning point where women who finally reach the top only to encounter a "rubber ceiling" that results in failure or departure is a logical issue to consider in the quest to understand why women are not proportionately represented in top leadership positions in law enforcement, the corporate world, the legal profession, or any other workplace environment.

### *The Political Context of the Findings*

Political issues were referred to throughout the discussion of the background information and presentation of the interview data. For purposes of discussion, politics is defined as having to do with “social relations involving authority or power” (WordNet, 2003). The nature of all of the barriers themselves is political. For example, most of the barriers such as the double standard, the “Old Boys Club,” the “Queen Bee,” or personal traits are political because of what may be referred to as “sexual politics,” defined as “the principles governing relationships between the sexes”, or “such relationships seen in terms of power” (Webster’s New Millennium Dictionary of English, 2003-2005). Race is political because of social relations involving differences in authority or power due to race. Recruitment procedures are political because of differences in power due to both sex and race.

Some more specific instances of political issues that arose from the data could be examined. Women may, in some instances, have been shown to have more politically naivety about the more global political circumstances surrounding their actions. And to the extent this is true, it would tie back in to the lack of mentoring and networking opportunities available for women in the organizations in which they work.

For example, Teresa Chambers, the Chief of the National Park Service, may have been inexperienced in politics and thus politically naïve and unsophisticated in her lack of understanding about the inadvisability of federal employees openly discussing funding issues with the press. Her plight may not reflect directly on gender discrimination, but may direct attention to the individual differences that may exist among women with regard to political astuteness. One may contrast Chambers with Nancy Pelosi, the new

House Democratic leader, and a female leader in the political arena, who clearly demonstrates political awareness and sophistication.

Or consider the incident where Quinn assisted Rhonda by ordering the firefighters to sandbag Rhonda's house. Quinn felt let down by Rhonda because Rhonda denied knowledge of this effort. Yet, possibly Rhonda was the more politically astute of the two women. Quinn acknowledged that Rhonda did not ask for this favor to be performed for her, possibly because she knew that it was improper and would have negative political consequences. The community outrage may have been understandable, and Rhonda may not have wanted to risk the political consequences of having personal intervention by Quinn that would be perceived as improper and viewed negatively in the political spectrum.

Clearly the intentions of women such as Teresa Chambers or Quinn are honorable and noble, but not of the sterling quality that leads to success in the political sphere. Perhaps some of the women who do not succeed at top level positions have not been groomed to have the astute political sense that is necessary to reach the top levels in government bureaucracies. An area, then, that needs to be examined is the mentoring that women need in order to be able to participate on even footing with men in the political arenas for which men groom each other.

Many of the barriers to advancement that women encounter have political overtones. For example, "the double standard" certainly implies differences in power relationships between genders. The recruitment procedures that are used in advancing to the top levels in law enforcement, especially to the chief position, were clearly shown to be different depending upon the power that one has by virtue of gender identity.

The contrast between the “Old Boys Club” and the “Queen Bee” concepts may show the difference in “trading favors” versus not doing so, indicating that the men are more politically astute in their actions than are women. Men may have learned the lessons of the benefits of power exchanges, while women are so new to the political world that they are still engaging in the in-fighting that could be considered as more characteristic of newcomers to the stage.

Other political issues were found to arise in the interview data, such as the dilemma that women have over whether to engage in what might be considered as typical male behaviors, or to “be themselves” or “be genuine.” Several of the participants revealed that they had struggled with these issues and had, in the end, determined it better to be “genuine.” However, the fact that such a struggle exists wherein women must find their own answers in how to “do gender” is another indication of a battle of “sexual politics.”

The concept of women “doing gender” appears similar to the situation that middle-class African Americans found themselves in along the road to progress from the segregation they experienced in the South to the post-war integrated North, when they lost their roots to the traditional black world and never received acknowledgement from the white sector, thereby becoming a class disassociated and without identity (Frazier, 1957).

There are political connotations in the qualities of “bulletproof leadership.” Qualities such as withstanding pressure, knowing when to leave, garnering support, and taking help from others all involve working within power relationships. A leader who succeeds through utilizing these principles is one who is politically savvy and uses that

ability to his or her own career advantage. These leadership traits may be ones that women have not acquired to the extent that men have due to lack of exposure to the male subculture or networking systems, and the disassociation that women in higher level positions tend to have from contact with members of their own gender.

The idea of a “rubber ceiling” that has the effect of propelling women out of their leadership positions and into lower level positions or simply removed from their organization or profession is a notion that is political in nature as it highlights the power differentials that exist between men and women in the business and professional world. The “rubber ceiling” is described as a creation of political forces that serve to deprive an individual of a leadership position that had finally been reached. Furthermore, it seems likely that women who are more politically connected and astute may be better equipped to resist the impact of the rubber ceiling.

The political context of the organizational factors that deprive women and minorities from reaching top positions and then may cause them to lose such positions is far-reaching in its significance in the study of equality in the workplace. The “politics of the glass ceiling” is a major reason for the hard and brittle nature of this substance that continues to impact the careers of women in American society.

### Conclusions

The literature that has been reviewed and the interviews that comprised the data for this project, as well as the pilot study, all point to the same conclusion. They provide clear evidence for the fact that women are not equally represented in the top position in law enforcement and that they are systematically denied that spot due to gender-related

barriers to equal advancement opportunity. The changes that have been made in allowing women to advance to the top have created cracks in the glass ceiling that allow a few women to slip through. However, the barriers that are placed in front of women who attempt to reach the top are significant, and have served not only to impede their progress but also to discourage upcoming generations of women from attempting this “near impossibility.”

As Chief Lynne Johnson pointed out: “we’re going through a period where not many women are applying to be officers and not as many women want to move up the ranks” (Goldston, ¶ 26). It appears that at the current rate, gender equality at least in the upper ranks of law enforcement will decline rather than increase. Johnson suggested that this situation may be due to it being “difficult to balance a personal life with a professional life the higher up you go” (Goldston, ¶ 26). This observation is consistent with comments made by some of the individuals interviewed in this research such as Chief Jones who noted that many individuals of both genders simply don’t aspire to top management.

Warren Farrell (2005) contended that women do not have equal pay or status to men in the workplace because women make career sacrifices in order to have greater happiness and fulfillment in their lives. If that is true for some women, then possibly it is due in part to the extreme difficulties that women have in career advancement due to glass ceiling barriers as revealed by these women participants.

Yet, there clearly are some women who strive to break through the invisible barriers of resistance to achieve ultimate career goals. For those women, equal opportunity for advancement must be made available. As Melinda Wolf, head of global

research and diversity at Goldman Sachs Group was quoted as saying: “Even if most women don’t want to break the glass ceiling, the few who do shouldn’t be ignored” (Clark, 2006, ¶ 12). As suggested in this research, if the struggle were not made so formidable, perhaps more women would be willing to attempt it.

The data do not show, as suggested by Farrell (2005), that women want easier jobs than men, but possibly some are discouraged from reaching for the brass ring by the titanic struggles that they must face when making more challenging career choices. As Wolf noted, women’s ambitions may become tempered by “a corporate culture that stifles their success” (Clark, 2006, ¶ 13).

In the case of the law enforcement participants in this study, ambitions may be stifled because of the difficulties imposed by the Herculean barriers to advancement that women not only face themselves, but also see other women facing. These barriers impact the career decisions they make and thwart their desires to jump hurdles in a frequently futile effort to reach the top. This research clarifies the point that women in law enforcement encounter not only the obvious faces of discrimination, but also by working in a male-dominated culture they encounter numerous “micro-inequities” (Rowe, 1990). These “micro-inequities” are “tiny, damaging characteristics of an environment” (p. 154) that create subtle discrimination through their infiltration into the organizational culture.

One of biggest boosts to the advancement of women in law enforcement has been the implementation of effective consent decrees. Some of the departments in this research that were the most effective in creating equal gender and racial advancement opportunities were those operating under clear and strict consent decrees. These court orders mandating the hiring and/or promotion of qualified women have been found to



have a very positive effect on increasing the number of women in sworn positions, the pool from which top law enforcement executives are drawn (National Center for Women & Policing, 2003b). They noted that “without consent decrees imposed to remedy discriminatory hiring and employment practices by law enforcement agencies, it is clear that the marginal gains women have made in policing would not have been possible” (p. 2).

The National Center for Women and Policing (2003a) noted: “Lawsuits and consent decrees are a valuable tool for increasing women’s representation in law enforcement” (p. 11). Sklansky (2006) wrote in a similar vein as he described the ramifications of judicial intervention in changing the demographics of American law enforcement:

The first and most obvious ramification of the new demographics of American law enforcement pertains to the continuing debate over race-conscious and gender-conscious affirmative action. Policing seems to be a dramatic success story for such measures, because the overwhelming weight of the evidence suggests affirmative action played a pivotal role in the diversification of American police departments (p. 1235).

Sklansky (2006) furthermore warns of the negative trends that may result if consent decrees do not continue to be enforced: “The heavy role that court-ordered affirmative action has played in integrating police departments provides reason to be concerned that progress may stall, or even be reversed, as consent decrees expire or are rescinded—often before departments are fully integrated” (p. 1237-1238). He provided statistics that show “evidence that this is already occurring” (p. 1238).

Perhaps judicial intervention is not the most desirable method for change, but the movement of more women into policing and from there into executive level positions is important, not only for reasons of gender equity, but also for the true benefit of having more women in leadership positions. The fusion of more women into the law enforcement culture will help dispel the negative impact of the element of “machismo” that still exists in many agencies.

One of the women pioneers in law enforcement, Penny Harrington, has commented on the problems in the Los Angeles Police Department (Spillar and Harrington, 2000). She and Spillar attributed much of the problems there to the type of male bonding that has in this study been referred to as “machismo” or the “Old Boys Club.” The incidences that they described of “macho bonding rituals,” as well as “celebrated killing and shootings by officers” and symbolic representations of “membership in the brotherhood” (2000, ¶ 1) not only serve to discriminate against the advancements of women, but also negatively affect the safety and fair treatment of the community.

Blame is placed on departments such as the LAPD for hiring “the wrong kind of men” and “not enough women” (Spillar & Harrington, 2000, ¶ 2) as well as on such departments that condone “authoritarian personalities that thrive on violence, where men with common backgrounds and values participate in unacceptable behavior with no fear of scrutiny by their like-minded peers” (¶ 6). The authors noted that investigations into such problems as in the LAPD must include examination of the “promotion of macho, militaristic tough guys” (¶ 10).

Very basically, Spillar & Harrington (2000, ¶ 10) ask the question that many

avoid, a question that goes to the heart of the existence of the “Old Boys Club” in law enforcement: “Maybe boys will be boys, but should we allow them to be cops?” It may be fruitful to compare this question with the type of denial of the significance of the gender barriers that was shown by Stella in her statement about men being men. We should ask the question whether individuals for whom grammar school excuses need to be made for their inappropriate behavior should actually be allowed to enforce the laws of the nation? When does the time come for a nation to mature and make the changes that are necessary for the equal opportunities upon which its heritage is based?

Recently, the low representation of women in chief level positions was confirmed with notice of the appointment of a woman police chief in Kissimmee, Florida. The article noted that “nationally, only 1 percent of all chiefs are women” (Pino, 2006, ¶ 6). Linda Loizzo, chief of the North Miami Beach Police Department confirmed the findings of this project by saying: “women are often finalists for a chief’s position, but the men get the job” (¶ 9).

While concurring that the progress in diversifying police departments may be slowing and that it is “grounds for concern,” Sklansky (2006, p. 1243) stressed the importance of recognizing the significance of the “new demographics of law enforcement so that we continue to increase our understanding of “the complex dynamics of race, gender and sexuality that shape and give meaning to policing.”

To focus on these new demographics, we need not only applaud the accomplishments of the many women who have risen to the top in law enforcement but give notice to the impact that their leadership makes to their organizations as well as to the changes their tenure makes on the general culture of American law enforcement. The

indestructible spirit of the women who demonstrated “bulletproof leadership” by reaching the top in law enforcement will be dispersed among the women in policing. Recognizing the vital importance of cultural progress, it is necessary for significant changes to be made that will finally remove glass ceiling barriers from all aspects of twenty-first century American organizational culture.

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**APPENDIX A: Consent Form**

## Consent Form

Madeline Meistrich, a doctoral student in the Leadership Studies Program at the University of San Diego, is conducting a dissertation study to fulfill degree requirements. The purpose of this study is to acquire information about issues faced by women leaders in law enforcement. A participant who volunteers to be interviewed as part of this research understands and agrees to the following:

1. The purpose of the research is to provide greater understanding of the advancement challenges encountered by women leaders in law enforcement. The participant will be expected to engage in conversation with the researcher for one to two sessions for up to two hours in the first session and one hour in the second session. The interviews will be audio-taped and transcribed.
2. No foreseeable risks greater than those encountered in ordinary life are associated with participating in this research.
3. This study should develop a richer understanding of women who are in line to become chiefs of police and provide guidance to women attempting to become law enforcement executives.
4. Every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality. Pseudonyms will be used for participants as well as for their departments and any individuals mentioned. The name of the participants will not be revealed in any publications that emanate from this project. Due to the small number of women in higher-level positions in law enforcement, however, complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.
5. Data will be kept in a locked cabinet and electronic data will be maintained in a password-protected computer. Research records will be kept confidential for a period of five years, after which the data will be destroyed.
6. Participation in this research is voluntary. The participant may refuse to participate or may withdraw from the study at any time, and data will not be used if so requested. The participant will have an opportunity to ask questions before agreeing to participate. There is no financial compensation provided nor will any costs be incurred. The participant will have an opportunity to review transcripts and to make modifications to them to ensure accuracy and confidentiality.
7. This research is conducted for academic and literary purposes. Outcomes of the research may be written or communicated in verbal presentations of the data in the classroom, in the dissertation process, or in venues such as conferences, journals, speeches, or books.

There is no agreement, written or verbal, beyond that expressed on this consent form. Any questions about this research project or the rights of the participant may be posed to Madeline Meistrich at (619) 972-9990 or Dr. Robert Infantino at (619) 260-4285.

I, the undersigned, have read and understood this form, and consent to the research it describes to me.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Subject

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Subject

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Principal Investigator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**APPENDIX B: Interview Protocol for First Interview**

### Interview Protocol for First Interview

With probes for clarification and further insight, the questions will be like the following:

1. Please describe your position in the organization, including how long you have been in this position and your career path in reaching this point.
2. Have you take any preparatory courses in leadership development either generally or specifically related to law enforcement?
3. Do you feel that you had to make a lot of sacrifices along the way to reach the level you have now attained? Can you give any examples?
4. Would you tell me about the political difficulties you encountered in reaching this level?
5. Have you attempted to become chief and failed at any point?
6. If you encountered political impediments, can you describe one or two examples to me?
7. Do you feel that you encountered different advancement issues than did your male counterparts?
8. Do issues of color or ethnicity play an interactive role with gender advancement?
9. How have you coped with any struggles you have faced in realizing your success?
10. Do women need special training or programs to succeed in such a political organization? Could you offer input into what is needed?
11. What advice could you provide to other women attempting to move up the ladder in law enforcement?
12. Will it be easier for women today or in the future to advance in this field? If so, in what ways?



**APPENDIX C: Follow-Up Questions for the Second Interview**

### Follow-Up Questions for the Second Interview

With probes for clarification and further insight, the questions will tend to be like the following:

1. At our last interview, you mentioned that there was more that you would like to share with me. I would love to hear it.
2. Can you tell me any more about the political struggles that you faced in reaching this level of success?
3. What has occurred in your organization or what other thoughts have you had since we last spoke that you would consider being of relevance to our conversation?

**APPENDIX D: Interview Protocol for Alternative Perspective Interviews**

### Interview Protocol for Alternative Perspective Interviews

With probes for clarification and further insight, the questions will tend to be like the following:

1. What are your views on the role of women as top leaders in law enforcement agencies?
2. Do you believe that women have had fair and equal opportunities for advancement to the chief position in this organization?
3. What mistakes have you seen made by women that may have precluded their advancement to the top level?
4. What advice could you offer to young women in the future who aspire to such positions?